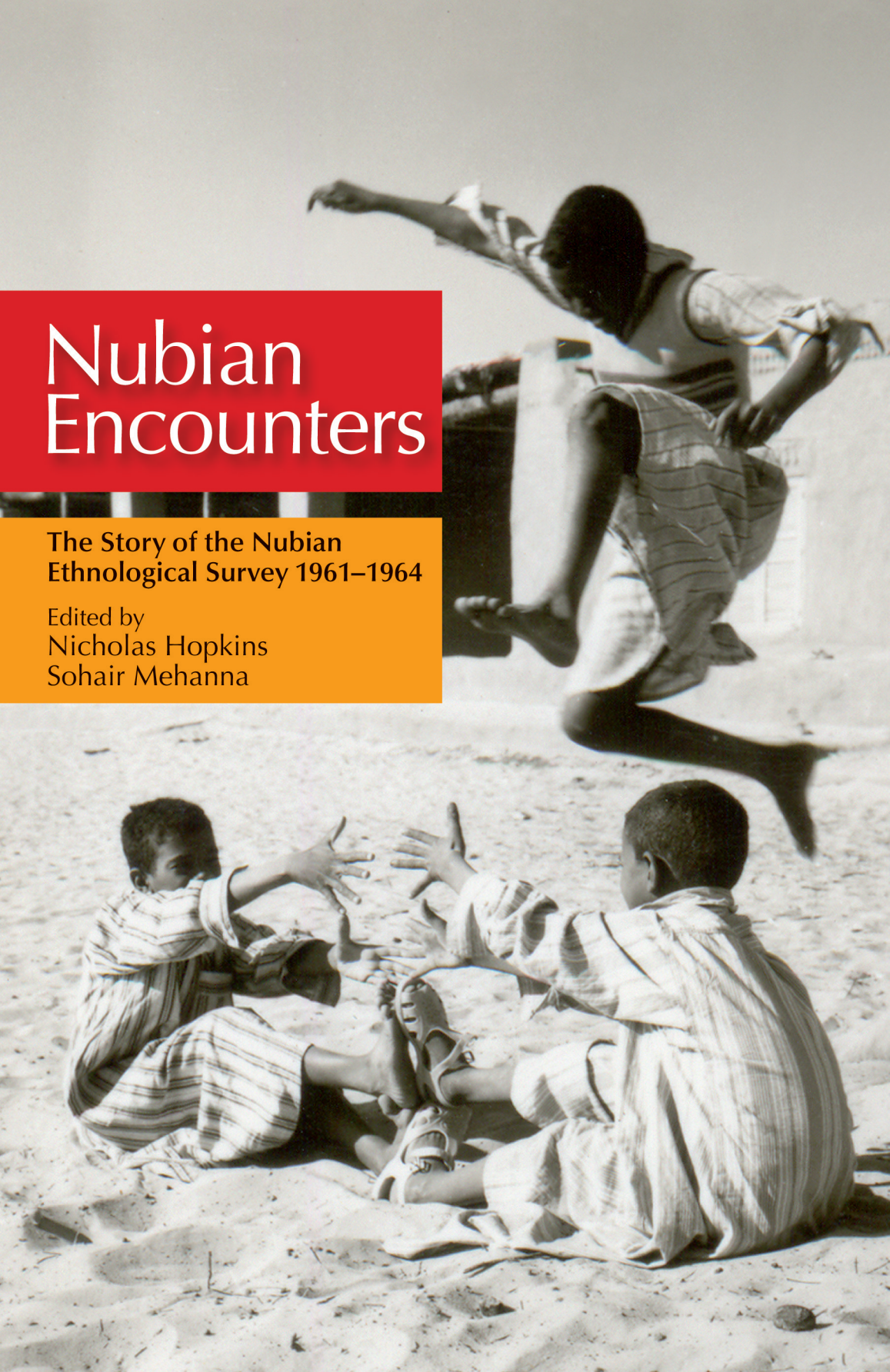


# Nubian Encounters

The Story of the Nubian  
Ethnological Survey 1961–1964

Edited by  
Nicholas Hopkins  
Sohair Mehanna



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In recognition of the imagination  
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# Contents

List of Maps and Illustrations	xi
Preface	xv
Acknowledgments	xxi

## **The Nubian Ethnological Survey: History and Methods**

*Nicholas S. Hopkins and Sohair R. Mehanna*

1. Nubian Resettlement and Anthropology	3
2. Anthropological Encounters in Nubia	18
3. After the Move	55

## **The Nubian Ethnological Survey: Sample Publications 1960–1990**

Introduction	81
--------------	----

*Nicholas S. Hopkins and Sohair R. Mehanna*

## **Research Plans and Practices**

Ethnological Survey of Nubia: Statement of Purpose and Organization	85
--	----

*Robert A. Fernea*

Field Research in a Nubian Village: The Experience of an Egyptian Anthropologist	91
---	----

*Hussein M. Fahim*

<b>Nubia in the 1960s: Economics and Ecology</b>	
The Kenuz <i>Charles Callender and Fadwa el Guindi</i>	111
Socioeconomic Implications of the Waterwheel in Adindan, Nubia <i>Abdul Hamid el Zein</i>	123
The Influence of Space Relations on the Tribal Groupings of Korosko <i>Mohamed Riad and Kawthar Abd El-Rasoul</i>	141
The Economic Basis of Egyptian Nubian Labor Migration <i>Thayer Scudder</i>	155
Some Differential Factors Affecting Population Movement: The Nubian Case <i>Peter Geiser</i>	175
<b>Religion and Community</b>	
Gender Relations in Kenuz Public Domains <i>Charles Callender</i>	193
The Village Community of al-Dirr, Nubia <i>Anna Hohenwart-Gerlachstein</i>	199
Change in Religion in a Resettled Nubian Community, Upper Egypt <i>Hussein M. Fahim</i>	209
<b>Resettlement</b>	
Problems of Nubian Migration <i>Mohamed Fikri Abdul Wahab</i>	227
Cross-Cultural Resettlement Administration: An Exploration of Potential Problems of Nubian Resettlement <i>Robert A. Fernea</i>	237

Initial Adaptations to a New Life for Egyptian Nubians <i>Robert A. Fernea and John G. Kennedy</i>	247
Community Health Aspects of Nubian Resettlement in Egypt <i>Hussein M. Fahim</i>	265
<b>Reflections after the Move</b>	
Field Research and Training of Autochthonous People: My Own Experience in Nubia <i>Anna Hohenwart-Gerlachstein</i>	281
Nubian Culture and Ethnicity <i>Robert A. Fernea and Aleya Rouchdy</i>	289
<b>Appendices</b>	
1. List of Districts in Old Nubia	301
2. List of Interviews	303
3. Key Nubian Collaborators	305
4. PhDs Earned by Team Members	306
<b>Bibliography</b>	
Publications by Members of the NES Team and Affiliates	307
Related Works	317
Archival Collections	327



# Maps and Illustrations

## Maps

Map 1: Districts of Egyptian Nubia in 1960.	2
Map 2: Upper Egypt showing New Nubia and other Nubian locations.	6
Map 3: Dahmit district in 1963.	110
Map 4: Settlement pattern in two Dahmit villages, 1963.	114
Map 5: Waterwheels and <i>naga</i> 's in Adindan district, 1963.	122
Map 6: Distribution of lineages and languages in Korosko, 1963.	140
Map 7: al-Dirr District, 1963.	198
Map 8: The agglomeration of five Nubian districts, 1970s.	248

## Illustrations

### Figure

*(between pages XX and XX)*

1. Hekmet Abu Zeid, Minister of Social Affairs, and Laila El-Hamamsy, Director of the Social Research Center.
2. Nubian Project meeting in the Social Research Center.
3. Robert Fernea and a Nubian interlocutor conversing in Ismailiya village, Ballana.
4. Research assistant Abdul Hamid el Zein and Nubian men, Ballana.
5. A gathering of women in Ismailiya.
6. Afaf el Deeb and friends sharing tea in Ismailiya.
7. Research assistant Karim Durzi talking with farmers, Ismailiya, Ballana.

8. Fernea and project motorboat in front of Abu Simbel Temple.
9. Afaf el Deeb with a marriage party.
10. Abdul Hamid el Zein observing a marriage exchange, Benha, Ballana.
11. A musical evening in Ballana.
12. Fahima Abdallah, Fadwa el Guindi, and friend, Dahmit.
13. Fathey Bahr explaining social data to Nawal el-Messiri, Dahmit.
14. Fikri Abdel Wahab interviewing, Dahmit.
15. Group of men including Abdul Fattah Eid and Fikri Abdel Wahab, Dahmit.
16. Bride and groom sponsors sealing marriage agreement as ethnographer team observe, Dahmit.
17. Dar al-Salam team in front of research headquarters.
18. Omar Abdel Hamid and Fikri Abdel Wahab.
19. Samiha El Katsha walking to her interview, Dar al-Salam.
20. Sohair Mehanna with children from Dar al-Salam.
21. Fetching water from a pump, Dar al-Salam.
22. Samiha El Katsha with informants.
23. Hussein Fahim and John Kennedy.
24. Project motorboat near 'Aniba.
25. Kawthar Abdel Rasoul, Anna Hohenwart, Asaad Nadim.
26. Mohamed Riad in Gersha.
27. A group of dancers with Kawthar Abdel Rasoul, Fadija zone.
28. Al-Malki, Arab area, *mulid* meal for men.
29. Assistants' table at banquet, Aswan, January 1964.
30. School pupils, al-Malki.

## Figure

(between pages XX and XX)

31. River boats at 'Aniba landing.
32. Post boat.
33. A felucca carrying a cow across the Nile, near Ferkundi, north of Ballana.
34. A merchant boat bringing goods to Ismailiya.
35. Measuring dates for division.
36. Sacks of dates being loaded for transport to Aswan.
37. Boy Scouts, Ismailiya, going to meet an official from Aswan.
38. Muezzin in Ismailiya.
39. Women getting water from the river in Ismailiya, Ballana.
40. Women on the banks of the Nile, Ballana.
41. Washing laundry, Ismailiya.

42. Women plastering the floor and walls of their house.
43. Boys playing the jumping game of *warjay* in front of team headquarters, Ismailiya.
44. Migrant Kenuz woman sewing in Ballana.
45. Cooking in Ismailiya.
46. Young women at a marriage.
47. Farming above the 121-meter flood line in Dahmit.
48. An elder in a Nubian village.
49. A man of Nubia.
50. Two boys in a doum palm.
51. Hussein Fahim working on Shatr Shalashil's life history, Dar al-Salam.
52. Hussein Fahim, Omar Abdel Hamid, and John Kennedy in Daraw headquarters.
53. *Saqiya* in Adindan.
54. The upper wheel of a *saqiya*.
55. The flow of water from a *saqiya*.
56. Government irrigation pumping station in Ballana.
57. Young girls in the fields.
58. Teenage girls.
59. Dancing during Shilshil *mulid*, Dahmit.
60. Old woman spinning.
61. Men dancing at a *mulid*.
62. Women dancing at a *mulid*.



# Preface

## The Goal

This book describes an encounter between the Nubian people of Upper Egypt and a team of anthropologists and other social researchers. This encounter occurred on the eve of the transfer of the Nubian inhabitants of the Nile Valley south of Aswan to a resettlement area near Kom Ombo north of Aswan. Many of the anthropologists were affiliated to the “Nubian Ethnological Survey,” managed through the Social Research Center of the American University in Cairo, with financial support from the Ford Foundation. The anthropologists were not the only group to make a hurried visit to Old Nubia in this twilight period; there were many archaeologists, artists, tourists, and others. But the anthropologists sought out an extended encounter with the people of the remaining villages along the Nile, and later with the post-resettlement population, with the goal of describing and analyzing their social and cultural circumstances.

In this book we recreate the encounters between the Nubian population of the southern Egyptian Nile Valley on the one hand and the anthropologists and other social researchers on the other. These anthropologists were themselves varied by nationality and achievement within the profession. There were Americans, Europeans, and Egyptians with degrees in anthropology, in addition to postgraduate students—mostly Egyptians—some of whom in turn went on to earn further degrees in anthropology. The team members saw themselves as social scientists systematically collecting information for use in constructing a formal account of Nubian society and culture. Moreover, they believed that the information they

would collect and process would be of use to the Egyptian authorities responsible for the move. The Egyptian authorities were in effect a third party hovering over this interaction. The team members were thus in the classic position of applied anthropologists between a government and a people, between a client and an object. With one exception the researchers were outsiders to Nubia, whether from Cairo or California. Many of the young Egyptian researchers saw Nubia as a frontier, a part of the Egyptian homeland that should be explored and explained to the rest of the nation. Almost all the researchers saw their involvement as a step on their career paths, whether in social science or not. They approached the field situation with enthusiasm and imagination.

The Nubians who were in touch with the researchers were not just objects of research, butterflies to be pinned down in a new vocabulary, but partners, active participants in the process. Such a remark is common and unsurprising for anthropology, but it bears mention here. The Nubians instructed the anthropologists about what was important in their life and how to behave and interact. Some were cooperative in this unexpected joint project while others were hostile or reticent, although even their reticence was part of the picture—reflecting resentment at their loss of habitat. Two generations later, Nubians remain actively involved in constructions of their history and pre-dam life, and in efforts to articulate the relationship between themselves and other Egyptians. The roots of this dialogue are deep but their interpretations now predominate.

The research process involved three key roles—the ‘senior’ researchers who as team leaders set the scientific agenda, the research assistants who did much of the actual interviewing and recording, and their Nubian interlocutors who also put their stamp on the process. We intend to give, as much as possible in this reconstruction, each of these roles their due. There were of course systematic linkages between these roles, reflecting not only the status differences but also the ability to communicate across various language and culture barriers. The web of encounters was intricate, as the Egyptian research assistants often had to mediate between the Nubians and the American team leaders.

The focus of the research was not just on life in the villages of Old Nubia, but on the Nubians as a people. From the beginning the task had been defined to include Nubian migrants as part of Nubian society. One could not comprehend life in the depopulated villages without understanding the income that came from the migration of many Nubians to the cities. A number of these migrants were contacted and interviewed, and their accounts

serve as a counterpoint to the village life and its local transformations. People moved back and forth and money flowed.

The social situation was a complex one. It ranged from the ministerial level in Cairo to domestic life in the villages of Old Nubia. It involved the chairman of the Joint Committee for Nubian Resettlement, an undersecretary at the Ministry of Social Affairs, the director of the Social Research Center (SRC) at the American University in Cairo, and the Ford Foundation representative in Cairo. The research structure included the director of the project and a number of 'senior' colleagues (they were mostly in their thirties, but were the ones with advanced degrees and prior experience) who recruited, trained, and supervised a larger number of research assistants, mainly Egyptians from the northern cities. It included collegial relationships with researchers concerned with parallel topics such as linguistics, archaeology, or the situation of Sudanese Nubians, as well as with others doing anthropological research in Egyptian Nubia. The field researchers were of course in contact with significant individuals among the Nubians ('key informants') and in turn with broader elements of the Nubian population. Through them the researchers attempted to reconstruct a picture of the economic and social life of the last days of Nubia to serve as a baseline for future development.

This book is also an account of the encounter between the Nubians and their changing ecological circumstances as a result of the construction of the Aswan High Dam, and thus with the Egyptian government that accepted responsibility for their transfer to new homes. Through the work of the anthropologists we present a picture of Nubian life in the last phase before the move. The book then follows the process through to the early moments of the resettlement situation in Kom Ombo, amplified by the study of the older resettlement in Dar al-Salam. This was a momentous change in the relationship between the Nubians and their social environment, even more perhaps than the changing relationship with the physical environment.

Examining this material in the early twenty-first century also highlights an encounter of a different kind, with an anthropology of a previous generation, which can now seem innocent and straightforward. At the time of this research effort, the focus was on the structural-functional analysis of bounded communities. Marxism, post-modernism, and other trends still lay ahead. Our presentation here can thus also be read as a contribution to the history of anthropology, certainly in Egypt and also more generally.

In short, there were encounters of various kinds—primarily between the research team and the objects of their research, the Nubians, who also

became participants and partners in the process. Other encounters played out between researchers at different stages in their careers; researchers and government officials of various types; the team and their various sponsors; and the past and the present. The explicit and implicit dialogue between these interlocutors provides the framework for this book.

This complex research project extended over several years and involved dozens of researchers and other participants. We have tried to give voice to multiple points of view and to reflect how they evolved over the project lifetime, from the early explorations of the project director to the final evaluations of one of the research assistants, who had become a professional collaborator. By reprinting scholarly works by the various participants, we restore the voice of the researchers.

### **The Process**

In the spring of 2007, a group of faculty at the SRC noted that the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Nubian Ethnological Survey (NES) was approaching. They agreed to establish a record and an archive of the NES carried out by the SRC in the early 1960s. This group included Sohair Mehanna, Reem Saad, and Susan Watts; they invited Nicholas Hopkins to join. Mehanna was the only member of the original team still working at the SRC. Watts had already undertaken a preliminary collection of material in the SRC files. It was decided to pursue this, and also to collect other published and unpublished material, and above all to interview as many members of the original team as possible. The work began with a small budget granted by Hoda Rashad, director of the SRC. It has been continuing since then.

There were two causes for our concern. One was the longstanding feeling that the accomplishments of the SRC in the 1960s were fast being forgotten. Researchers would approach the SRC to find out what data the Center retained, and it was not easy to provide them with a satisfactory answer. The other was the successive deaths of two of the key figures, Fikri Abdul Wahab in 2004 and Hussein Fahim in 2007, threatening the collective memory in another way. Thus our determination to salvage the record of the NES and to make it available to a wide audience of scholars and citizens. We hope that an examination of this record will inspire a future generation of researchers to pursue and develop the issues raised in the twentieth century.

Over a two-year period the team collected proposals, reports, and other documentation; gathered and inventoried photos; tracked down obscure and missing publications; and sought out members of the original team both in Cairo and elsewhere for interviews. Most of the interviews were face to

face, but some were over the telephone. The first interview was with Robert Fernea in Oregon in July 2007; the latest to date was in Cairo in June 2009. Almost everyone we approached did their best to remember events that took place nearly fifty years earlier, but memories are faulty and there are always additional questions to ask. Some recollections were tape recorded, while others were the subject of extensive note-taking. A list of interviews is given in an appendix, and the notes or transcripts are part of our archive.

The documentary record was scattered and incomplete. Of course we drew heavily from the published record. We found some material in the SRC files, although less than we had hoped. The papers of the late Charles Callender fortuitously ended up in the National Anthropological Archives at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., and we were able to consult that material, and to copy a significant amount from that archive for our own records. We are also grateful to Professor Thayer (Ted) Scudder of the California Institute of Technology for forwarding to us some of his files from the project, including a record of the interviews he and his assistants conducted in 1962, but also many drafts and other documents he had received from Hussein Fahim extending into the 1970s. The Ford Foundation, which provided the funding for the NES through the SRC, also made their files available to us. The record of these collections can be found in the appendix. The door is still open for other donations.

This material will be made available through the archives of the American University in Cairo. The story of the NES is a chapter in Egyptian history, in the history of the social sciences in Egypt, and also in the history of anthropology in general. It showcases the joys and frustrations of cross-cultural fieldwork, and raises questions of interpretation. The study is also a chapter in Nubian history, since the project was to observe and record aspects of Nubian life before and after the great resettlement of 1963–64. Moreover, it is an excellent example of cooperation among people of many different backgrounds, from the researchers who took the lead to the assistants they recruited and trained, and to the Nubians, experts on their own life, who guided them in the research.



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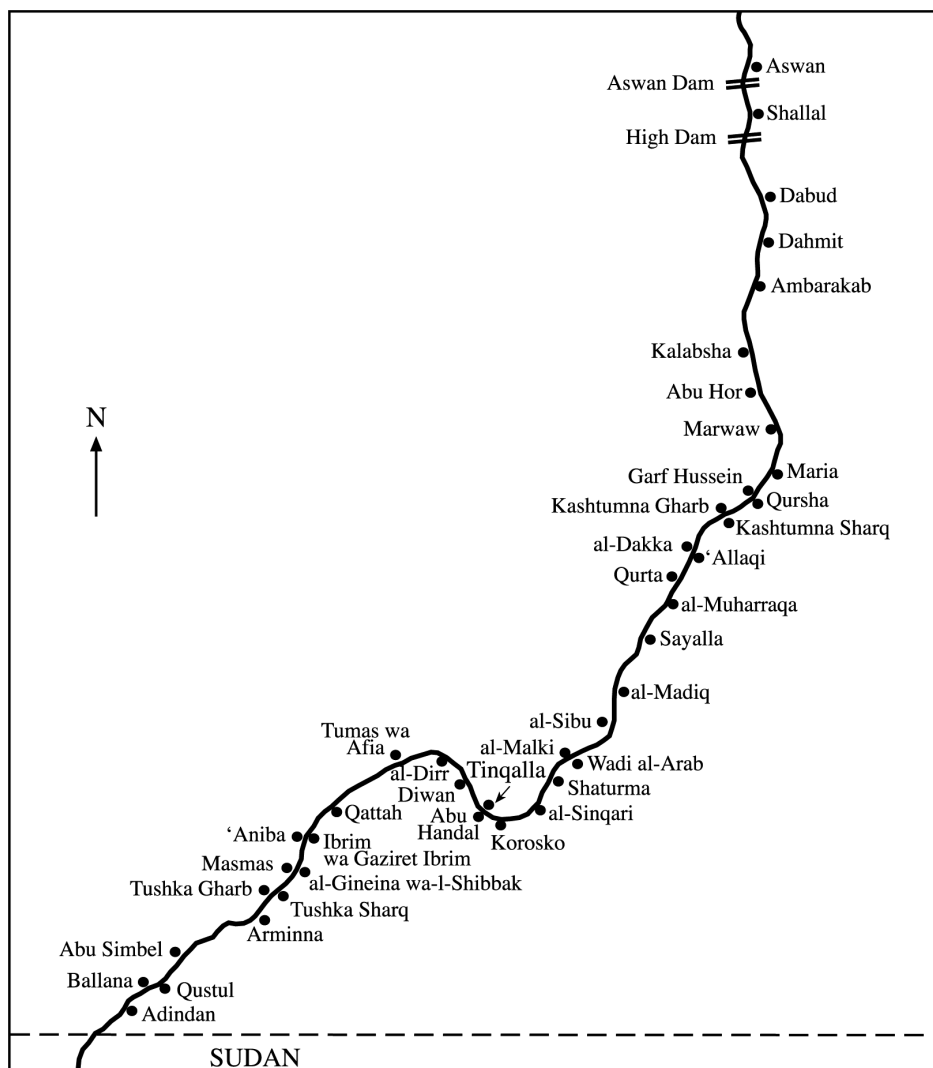
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And last but not least we are grateful to our friends at the AUC Press for their patient support.



# **The Nubian Ethnological Survey** History and Methods

*Nicholas S. Hopkins and Sohair R. Mehanna*



Map 1: Districts of Egyptian Nubia in 1960. Based on a map in “Tahjir ahali al-Nubah,” Cairo: Ministry of Social Affairs, 1964.

# 1 Nubian Resettlement and Anthropology

Not one of the benefits of the Dam can be realized without the success of such complex social adjustments as are involved in relocation, the building of new communities, or the establishment of new industries.<sup>1</sup>

The construction of the Aswan High Dam was a major step forward in Egypt's development, following the establishment of the republic in 1952. A massive project, it transformed the ecology of the Nile Valley in Egypt and the Sudan. However, it did have a downside, namely that the population resident in the submergence area behind the dam was forced to leave. To ensure the roughly 100,000 affected people did not become victims of the broader plan, the Egyptian and Sudanese governments committed themselves to a planned and progressive initiative that would see the residents, collectively known as Nubians, resettled in an environment more conducive to development, although it was recognized that there would be a sense of loss. The overall plan required engineering expertise to build the dam and related works, but it was also a social experiment, transforming the lives of the displaced Nubians and bringing them into a different relationship with the Egyptian state and the world economy. *Nubian Encounters* approaches this development process through an examination of the efforts of social scientists affiliated with the American University in Cairo's Social Research Center (SRC) to record Nubian culture before the relocation, track the transfer, provide advice to those responsible for the resettlement, and offer a baseline for future research.

We retrace the efforts of a remarkable and talented team of Egyptian and western anthropologists and related scholars working between 1960 and 1975 as the Nubian Ethnological Survey and with the cooperation of many individual Nubians to record and understand a way of life that seemed doomed to disappear. The work was a mixture of ‘salvage anthropology’ and ‘development anthropology,’ also reflecting the structural-functionalism of the day. The team argued that the Nubian experience should not be allowed to disappear and that the lessons of that variant for social theory should be recorded. The understanding of the specificities of the Nubian case was intended to facilitate the process of resettlement as administrators and others were apprised. The research was intended both to document social organization and cultural functioning and to help grasp the processes of social change which the Nubian population was undergoing. Through the recorded results of the research team, a picture of the resettlement process emerges. Just as the resettlement was a major event in the social history of rural Egypt, so the effort to understand and record was a significant chapter in the history of anthropology and related social sciences in Egyptian intellectual life.

Our book consists of five parts: these introductory remarks to set the background, a detailed account of the research process itself, a discussion of the follow-up efforts to the project until the present, and a selection of published and unpublished material displaying the research results. The bibliography is intended to be comprehensive for the NES authors, but only selective for other related works then and since. *Nubian Encounters* focuses on the resettlement issue and does not deal with the thorny questions of Nubian history and origins.

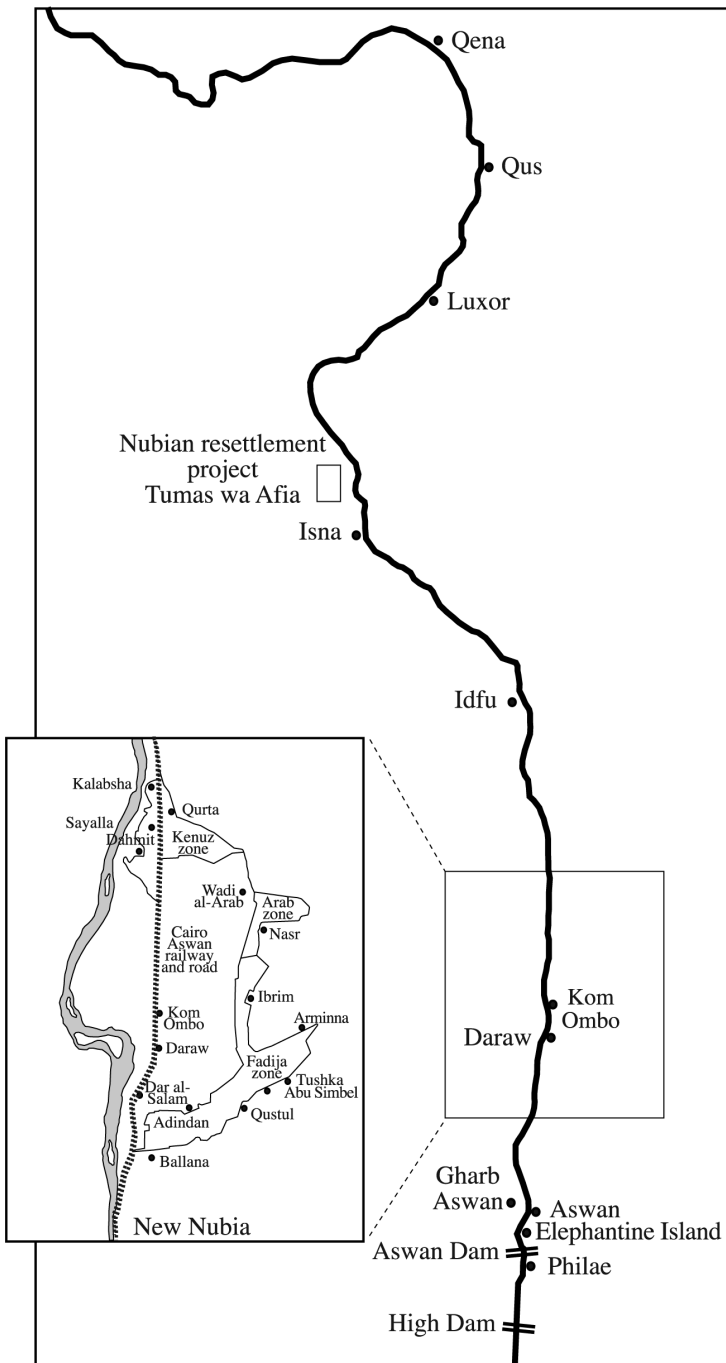
From early on the team members were conscious of an audience that would include the Nubians themselves, as well as Egyptians in general. Some of the writing was directly aimed at a Nubian audience: Nubians were invited to the 1964 “Symposium on Contemporary Nubia” that culminated the fieldwork period, and Fernea’s ethnographic essay in *Nubians in Egypt* was drafted with the Nubian audience in mind. Although by now the fieldwork situation is distinctly in the past, almost half a century ago, and few of its agents and participants are still alive, the data presented in the publications on the Nubians, including those in this volume, are a record of research results that is available to Nubians, Egyptians, and scholars. One goal of this volume is to guide readers to those research results and make them more useful by explaining the processes that led to them.

## **The Aswan High Dam and Its Implications**

The goal to control the waters of the Nile for the benefit of the land and people of Egypt is ancient. The headwaters of the Nile are far to the south of Egypt; the rainfall in these areas is seasonal, and consequently the river has a period of high water and one of low water. About 80 percent of the water flow derives from the Ethiopian highlands (Blue Nile) and the remaining 20 percent from the Lake Victoria basin supplemented by the rainfall in the southern Sudan (White Nile). Traditional Egyptian agriculture was based on the flood, which crested in August and September of each year.

Beginning in the nineteenth century, efforts were made to regularize the flow of waters in the Nile, with the goal of modernizing Egyptian agriculture. Along with many other engineering projects in Egypt and the Sudan, this included establishing a dam at the first cataract near Aswan. The old Aswan dam was completed in 1902 and was then raised in 1912 and again in 1933. The dam was not intended for year-round storage of water, but to retain the flood waters of the Nile and to release them slowly so that irrigation water in Egypt downstream of the dam would be available for a longer period. This would effectively mitigate both excessively high Nile floods and very low ones, evening out the supply of water so that crops would be more predictable. But the retention of water behind the dam also meant that the cultivatable land upstream would periodically be submerged. With the construction of the dam and the two raisings, the flooding in the valley reached farther and farther south. The original dam produced a seasonal lake one hundred kilometers long, the first elevation one of 150 kilometers, and after the second elevation the flooding extended 290 kilometers—reaching nearly into the Sudan. After the second elevation, the high water mark was maintained at the 121 meter contour. The Nubians living in the valley were forced to adjust to this variation either by moving farther up the sides of the valley or to a new location altogether. They also had to modify the agricultural methods they had been practicing because of the loss of their best land. Those who rebuilt often constructed elaborate houses with their compensation money.<sup>2</sup>

The lake would rise in the early part of the winter and then gradually recede during the spring as the water was drawn down for agriculture north of the dam. Thus the water would be lowest in the early summer. Egyptian Nubia would then feel a rise in the water as the annual flood from upstream entered the valley. The dam was generally left open during the first part of the flood when most of the silt was carried, allowing it to pass downstream rather than accumulating behind the dam. The sluices were then closed



Map 2: Upper Egypt showing New Nubia and other Nubian locations. Various sources.

until drawdown was needed. However, much of the variation in the lake level was controlled by the irrigation engineers at the dam who were trying to maximize the use of water in agriculture. They also sometimes varied the water level to ensure electricity generation at the dam. From a farmer's point of view, then, the water level was unpredictable, and unreliable for farming.

In northern Nubia farmers could try a fodder or quick-growing crop like melon in the summer, but even then there was a danger that water levels might rise unexpectedly. They also transferred soil from the riverbed to create small irrigated plots above flood level. In southern Nubia the growing season was longer and conditions approximated those of the pre-dam situation (see below, El Zein on Adindan). There were also several pump schemes where year-round agriculture was possible. One such scheme was in place at Ballana.

A proposal for a much grander Aswan High Dam was first published in 1948 (Waterbury 1979). The proposal foresaw year-round storage—and thus a permanent lake. After 1952, the new republican regime took the decision to pursue the construction of the Aswan High Dam. Preliminary planning, both engineering and with respect to the Nubian population, was soon under way. After Sudanese independence in 1956, a new agreement on the partition of the Nile waters was signed between the two countries on November 8, 1959 (Nile Water Agreement). This agreement between Egypt and the Sudan stipulated that the water would be divided according to a ratio of three parts for Egypt and one part for the Sudan, calculated on the flow at Aswan. It enabled construction to commence on January 9, 1960. The flow of the river was blocked and the lake began to fill in summer 1964; the dam was considered operational in 1970, inaugurated officially in January 1971; and the lake was considered full in 1975. The lake flooded the entire Nile Valley south of the dam, and well into the Sudan, a total distance of about five hundred kilometers. It raised the water level at least fifty meters, to a contour level between 170 meters and 175 meters, with a maximum level of 182 meters, and produced an entirely new ecology (see Balal et al. 2008).

On the eve of an agreement on the High Dam between the Egyptian and Sudanese governments, the Egyptian government first approached UNESCO on April 6, 1959, requesting its help in saving the monuments of Nubia; a few months later the Sudanese government followed suit (Mokhtar 1988). UNESCO made its first general appeal on March 8, 1960, and the outcome was the International Campaign to Save the Monuments of Nubia (1960–80) which “resulted in the excavation and recording of hundreds of

sites, the recovery of thousands of objects, and the salvage and relocation of a number of important temples to higher ground.”<sup>3</sup> Many countries and institutions with a history of involvement in Egyptology joined in the program, and UNESCO played a coordinating role (Säve-Söderbergh 1987). In 1982 this led to another international campaign, to establish the Nubia Museum in Aswan. No comparable appeal was made either to save the displaced Nubian people from loss or to record their culture before it was swept under the flood.

The Nubian residents, equally divided between Egypt and the Sudan, were forced to evacuate the area entirely. The Egyptian Nubians were resettled in prepared settlements in the Kom Ombo region, about fifty kilometers north of Aswan. Meanwhile, the Sudanese Nubians were mostly transferred to a new irrigation project at Khashm al-Girba, farther to the south and close to the Ethiopian–Eritrean border. In effect the Egyptian and Sudanese Nubians were asked to abandon their homeland in the interest of greater prosperity for their countries as a whole.<sup>4</sup>

The Egyptian government had begun making preparations for a possible move as early as 1956. The main responsibility for the resettlement of the Nubians fell to the Ministry of Social Affairs and in 1956 the Permanent Council for National Production Development analyzed the repercussions the High Dam project would have on the people of Nubia. A year later there were studies related to housing projects and social assistance. And in 1960 there was an overall social survey of Nubia carried out by the Ministry of Social Affairs, which represented the first effort to identify the Nubians who would be eligible for resettlement in the first stage of the migration operation. These studies were largely statistical in nature and were designed to help in planning (Abdul Wahab 1964:1–2 [see below]; see also Fahim 1983:32–34).

The Committee for the Investigation of Nubian Demands was formed, also in 1960, as planning for relocation continued. Nubian leaders asked for and received assurances that the Nubian villages would be moved as units, and each village would retain its old name preceded by the word ‘new’ (el Abd 1979:101). In 1961, the Joint Committee for Nubian Migration was formed under the chairmanship of the undersecretary of the Ministry of Social Affairs and composed of representatives from other concerned ministries (Serageldin 1982). The committee was tasked with organizing the resettlement of the Nubians. Overall responsibility for Nubian resettlement was assigned to the governor of Aswan. The Nubians were moved between October 18, 1963 and June 27, 1964, mostly toward the end of that period (see

Wizaret al-Shu'un al-Ijtima'iyā 1964). Local leaders, members of the Arab Socialist Union, teachers, and Nubian boy scouts all helped with the move.

Naturally there weren't only resettlement implications but interlocking agricultural ones as well. Sayyid Marei, the powerful minister of agriculture at the time, took an interest in the study because of its implications for new land resettlement in Tahrir Province and elsewhere,<sup>5</sup> but when he was removed from his post, there was no more follow-up from this ministry. Marei was dismissed on October 2, 1961 amid bureaucratic infighting and also real problems such as an infestation of cotton worms, the breakup with Syria, and debates over reclaimed land (Springborg 1982:158). The interest that Marei had taken in the project, implicitly on behalf of the Egyptian government, was a significant factor in persuading the Ford Foundation to offer the grant, since it indicated that this was more than just a bunch of anthropologists at AUC.<sup>6</sup> Marei's early involvement notwithstanding, the research team fell under the supervision of the Ministry of Social Affairs, headed during this period by Dr. Hekmet Abou Zeid.

In 1966 the Ministry of Land Reform took over responsibility for the New Nubia project, and the Egyptian Authority for the Utilization and Development of Reclaimed Land (EAUDRL) was soon established through a presidential decree. Its main function was to boost soil fertility and productivity levels in reclaimed areas, and provide settlers with a number of community services to improve social conditions and raise living standards for farmers (el Abd 1979:95). EAUDRL's mandate covered many newly reclaimed and resettled areas including the Nubian colonies. The Ministry of Social Affairs was no longer responsible; their job had been the move and that had been achieved. The handover reflected the intention to move from the social to the technical.

### **Nubia and the Nubians before the Move**

During much of its course, roughly from Khartoum to Aswan, the Nile flows through desert, and the population is limited to a fairly narrow strip of land on one or both banks. Southward of Aswan, and continuing until Dongola in the Sudan, the settled people belong to various 'Nubian' groups. They are now known collectively as Nubian, although that term has also been used to refer to only one of the groups. The Nubians are historically and linguistically distinct from the Arabic-speaking populations to the north and south, and also from the nomads of the surrounding deserts.

Egyptian Nubia stretched from Aswan to the Sudanese border, a distance of about 320 kilometers. At the time of resettlement in the early

1960s, there were an estimated 50,000 Nubians living in the Egyptian submergence zone. Settlement was strung out along the banks of the Nile at a level high enough to avoid the flood. Altogether there were forty *nabias*, or districts, of which seventeen were Kenuzi, five were Arabic-speaking, and eighteen were Fadija, according to the language spoken.<sup>7</sup> These districts in turn consisted of a dozen or more *naga*'s or village settlements, which were the actual unit of co-residence, while the district was more of a political unit. The Fadija district of al-Dirr for instance had 1,075 residents in twelve settlements (Hohenwart-Gerlachstein 1965:49), and the Kenuzi district of Dahmit had 1,055 residents in twenty-four settlements (Callender n.d.). The Egyptian Ministry of Social Affairs recognized 536 *naga*'s between the dam site and the Sudanese border in 1962 (Scudder 1966:104). The 1960 census records 560 settlements divided among forty districts.<sup>8</sup>

The residents actually living in Nubia formed only part of the total Nubian population, as there had been heavy emigration, more or less permanent, since at least the nineteenth century. In the 1960s it was estimated that there were as many Nubians living outside Nubia as inside; the migrants tended to be the adult males so that the resident population was mostly female. However, the urban female population was growing as families reunited. Callender estimated that 80 percent of the people from Dahmit lived elsewhere (Callender and el Guindi 1971:4), an estimate that includes many women. Nubians had migrated to Cairo and other northern Egyptian towns at least from the nineteenth century, and were well known as doormen, concierges, messengers, cooks, and other household help. Their distinctiveness and character traits (honesty, reliability) encouraged a certain fascination with their original populations.<sup>9</sup> As the ability of the Nubian land to support the population diminished, the reliance on remittances from the urban offshoots increased. The effects of the transfer were thus felt not only by the resident population, but also on the Nubian colonies in the urban areas. The 1960s in particular saw a lot of coming and going as Nubians maneuvered to qualify for compensation and to help their relatives prepare for the move. The administration, of course, wanted to know how many people would actually make the move. The numbers were important to all.

Entirely Muslim, the Nubians spoke three different languages—Kenzi (Matoki) in the north, Arabic in a small pocket in the center, and Fadija (Mahas) in the south. The name 'Nubian' is sometimes used to refer only to the last of these groups, at other times to all together. In Old Nubia, Matoki and Mahas had about the same number of speakers; Arabic speakers

were fewer. The Nubian languages belong to the East Sudanic family of the Nilo-Saharan phylum and are thus related to other languages spoken farther south in the Sudan. The geographical distribution of related languages can provide clues to cultural history, but the pattern here represents an unsolved historical puzzle. In Egypt, the northernmost group is the Kenuz, and the southern group is the Mahas or Fadija. The Fadija speakers in the Sudan are an extension of the Egyptian population, situated around Wadi Halfa. Farther south, they give way to more speakers of Kenzi, here known as Dongolawi. Both Matoki and Mahas contain extensive borrowings from Arabic (Rouchdy 1991).

Although the languages provide a mark of distinction, culturally there was more of a continuum. Some of the traits that anthropologists identify as specifically Nubian are in fact found in the neighboring groups (for example, the belief in *mushabra*, see Callender and el Guindi 1971:13). Others are no longer relevant, for instance the fact that Nubians remained Christian for many centuries after Egypt became predominantly Muslim. Issues of religion, social organization, and family structure are not clear markers. Although Nubians are generally considered to be darker-skinned than other Egyptians, this is not always the case. In fact many people of lighter skin color have also settled among and been assimilated into Nubian society (Hungarians, Bosnians, Kurds, and the like, mostly resulting from Ottoman military garrisons), as have black slaves from southern Sudan. There were some differences in social status—small groups of socially stigmatized ex-slaves from southern Sudan lived among the Nubians and had been Nubianized; some ‘Ababda had drifted in from the Eastern Desert attracted by pasture for their flocks and the chance to share in the caravan trade;<sup>1</sup> a group of outsiders from the north, the *kushaf*, historically had held dominant social positions, especially in the Fadija area from al-Dirr upstream. Kinship organization (lineages) and Sufi brotherhoods provided other forms of social organization. There were wealth differences produced by varying kinds of migration experience and levels of involvement in trade and transport. Apparently isolated, the Nubian population was always open to influences from elsewhere.

Nubian social organization fits within the broader Middle Eastern pattern. Kinship is patrilineal, marriage is frequently patrilocal, and there is a durable preference for marriage with cousins. Most relations in the local community are also with kin, whether patrilateral or matrilinear. There is a marked social segregation between male and female spheres. Leadership tends to be informal and reflects seniority as well as personal characteristics.

The work of the Nubian Ethnological Survey (NES) did not overthrow these generalizations, but it did specify their workings in particular cases, as the reprinted selections make clear.

There has been something of a tendency to essentialize the Nubians, to consider them as a homogeneous group.<sup>11</sup> This is overstating the case. Although there are features which may characterize the Nubians in general, there are also many specific circumstances that have created unique histories and geographies for different communities. Each district, for instance, has its distinctive geographical setting—the amount of available farmland, position in a trade network, role in state administration—and these have their effects, most visible in pre-1964 labor migration patterns. As mentioned above, status distinctions are not absent, reflecting previous slave status and patterns of inward migration (Hohenwart 1965; Fogel 1997). “Taken as a whole, Nubia very likely represents a wide variety of economic and social behaviors which may be as differentiated as the linguistic bases distinguishing the three regions of Nubia” (Geiser 1967:174).

These considerations aside, Nubians have long been considered a specific and distinct population, as noted by pioneering western travelers including early nineteenth-century travelers Burckhardt (1987) and Lane (2000). Certainly in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries a separate Nubian identity has become widely recognized, affirmed by Nubians and accepted by others (Fernea 1973; Fogel 1997). This has generally been a ‘Nubian’ identity rather than one linked to the speech communities. The identity includes both people in the homeland and the very extensive migrant population in Egyptian and Sudanese cities. One of the apparent paradoxes of the 1964 relocation is that a unique Nubian identity has been, if anything, reinforced. Nubian distinctiveness in contemporary Egypt gives rise to debate: there is both the assertion of identity and a continuing discussion about whether it matters or should matter. Recent publications on the Nubians constantly return to this theme (Poeschke 1996; Jennings 2009; Fogel 1997; and Smith 2006).

### **The Anthropology of the Day**

The NES was conceived and conducted within a framework of the anthropology of the late 1950s and 1960s. Anthropology has changed considerably since that time. Accordingly, it is important to recall what that anthropology was in order to appreciate the choices made in the study. This was an anthropology focused on studies in tribes and villages, with an emphasis on the bounded community. It was strongly influenced by

British structural-functionalism as represented by Radcliffe-Brown, Evans-Pritchard, Malinowski, and their followers. The so-called ‘culture and personality’ school, prevalent in the US, shared the same assumptions about the unit of study. Other approaches in anthropology, such as the structuralism proposed by Lévi-Strauss, the political economy trend associated with the popularity of Marxism in the 1970s, social constructionism, and post-modernism had still not been conceived.

Until the 1960s it was rare for American anthropologists to be interested in the peoples of Africa or Asia. Thus it is not surprising that most of the Americans who worked on the NES had previously worked with American Indian groups or had shown some interest in them.<sup>12</sup> The American Indian groups were mostly relatively small populations who had been in lengthy contact with Euro-American society. The main research issues included the effort to reconstruct a pre-contact situation and to understand the process of cultural assimilation. The scant linguistic and archaeological evidence was brought to bear on questions of origins and cultural history. After the 1960s American Indians ceased to be the center of interest for American anthropology, and the theoretical focus also shifted.

In the early twentieth-century, most anthropologists, whether American or European, were interested in ‘primitive’ people, seen as remnants of earlier stages of civilization—pygmoid groups, hunters and gatherers, and the like. The study of such groups was understood to reveal the broader history of the human experience.<sup>13</sup> Subsequently, the focus shifted to the study of a group’s ‘culture.’ Beginning in the 1930s, British and British-trained anthropologists began to analyze the contemporary life of African and similar peoples, and to develop theories—which we can collect under the heading of functionalist or structural-functionalist—to interpret and analyze them (Kuper 1973). By the 1960s these theories were one of the dominant trends in anthropology (or ‘social’ anthropology) and efforts at cultural history or historical reconstruction of the movements of peoples fell out of favor. Another main theme, reflecting the popularity of Freudian psychology in the 1930s and 1940s, was the study of the links between personality and culture.

By the 1950s and 1960s interest in ‘primitive remnants’ taken as silent witnesses to the past of humanity or as a possible ‘missing link’ in human social evolution had given way to a concern for each culture as a unique way of life whose preservation was important for the future of humankind (see, for example, Ruth Benedict’s *Patterns of Culture*, 1934). Thus emerged the concept of salvage anthropology, based on the urgency of preserving a record of a culture about to disappear. Built into the notion of salvage anthropology

is the understanding that it is the task of scholars to record the way of life of a people unable to speak for themselves. In some interpretations of salvage anthropology the concern is with oral literature, music, and so on—the so-called ‘intangible heritage’—as well as with folk art and other artifacts. More complicated is the recording of a social organization together with its associated set of values.

The notion of salvage is based on the idea that a ‘culture’ is not only unique, but is a bounded entity, distinct in its language and practices, and consisting of isolable traits. According to the functionalist premise, even a change in part of the culture would have ramifications for other parts. This was the situation in the 1960s at the time of the NES. Such a usage is no longer dominant in anthropology, where researchers prefer the notion of ‘culture’ as a set of open-ended and meaningful stratagems, to ‘a culture,’ with its implications of a self-contained system. Meanwhile, the effort to record the past gave way to a concern to shape the future, in other words, to what has become known as development anthropology.

Although anthropologists have always sought practical applications for their knowledge, practice has usually been a minor concern in the evolution of the field. ‘Pure’ research has always been more highly regarded than ‘applied.’ The real push for an applied anthropology emerged from the concerns of the Second World War, and later evolved toward a concern with ‘development.’ When the NES got under way, there was relatively little large-scale involvement in development, let alone in the resettlement issues the Nubians were facing. The first major study was the Kariba Dam research from the Zambezi basin in southern Africa, and the publications were only just coming out when the Nubian project began (Colson 1960; Scudder 1962). Since then there have been numerous studies, including the Nubian one, and understanding is much more systematized.

Meanwhile Egyptian social science was emerging. Sociology was formally taught at Cairo University from 1925, and anthropology from the early 1930s. The sociology taught was close to philosophy and focused on questions of national identity (Zayed 1995; Roussillon 1999), whereas the anthropology was in many ways close to folklore (see Galal 1937). Beginning in the 1930s a desire for social reform called a different kind of social science into being (‘Uways 1989). The 1952 revolution led to optimism that a younger generation of Egyptians could take their society in hand and refashion it for the modern era. As in many similar countries, this produced an attitude that favored trying to understand the existing social and cultural patterns so that they could be transformed. Although many Egyptians remained interested

in these patterns, others began to recognize the need for an applied anthropology and social science in general. One of the goals was to bring ethnically or socially marginal populations into the national mainstream. In this they were often similar to westerners interested in promoting development. This was the idealism of the 1950s and 1960s: simply researching in order to contribute to a scholarly record did not seem adequate; there had to be a broader goal, and the insistence on an applied or policy dimension to social science continues until the present (Sholkamy 1999). Intellectually, the NES represented a confluence of the shifts in interest in western anthropology, particularly toward structural-functionalism and the rising need of Egyptian scholars and authorities for socially constructive projects.

The NES was also a collaborative project. Roger Sanjek (1990:329–34) has reviewed a number of such projects in anthropology, pointing out that they were especially common prior to the 1970s. All these joint projects were based on the idea of multimember teams—either focusing on different aspects or representing varying points of view—that would pool their notes for the benefit of all team members. To reduce the disparity among different styles of note-taking, the notes were often indexed according to the categories of the then-popular Human Relations Area Files (HRAF).<sup>14</sup> In some cases there were efforts to unify all the publications, perhaps in a series with the team leader as senior author. None of the projects Sanjek cited involved the dynamic combination of national and international researchers found in the NES. Although there is no indication that NES organizers modeled themselves after any one of these projects, there is some resemblance.<sup>15</sup>

It is interesting to note that the initial project described here was formally called an ‘ethnological’ survey, and it was also occasionally referred to as an ‘ethnographic’ one, but never an ‘anthropological’ one. Ethnology and ethnography have had different meanings over the years, but one consistent distinction is that ethnology involves some degree of synthesis and comparison while ethnography is the documentation of a particular society or case. From that point of view, work conducted over the course of this project is closer to ethnography than ethnology: comparison was limited and cultural history was not the goal.<sup>16</sup> Instead the focus was on ‘salvage ethnography’ or ‘urgent anthropology,’ and on case studies. Today such a study would be called ‘ethnographic’ or ‘anthropological,’ but not ‘ethnological.’ Nonetheless, at the time one of the American senior researchers (Callender) strenuously objected to calling it ‘ethnographic,’ insisting it should be called ‘ethnological.’ In those days, ‘ethnographic’ was considered somewhat dismissive.<sup>17</sup> Later fashions shifted, and to call someone a “good

ethnographer” became high praise. So Kennedy noted, “The longer I work in this field the more convinced I become of the value of substantive data. . . . Ethnographic facts have been of far more lasting significance than the great bulk of theoretical formulations, no matter how brilliant the latter seemed at the time of their currency” (Kennedy 1978:xvi).

## **The Institutional Framework**

The NES was initiated and housed in the Social Research Center of the American University in Cairo. AUC was founded in 1919, and by the 1950s it was beginning to shake off its tentative missionary beginnings and evolve into a modern university. At the time the NES began the university was housed in a few buildings in central Cairo. It was only just beginning to offer master’s degrees (Murphy 1979, 1987). In 1960–61 there was a total of 383 students including twenty graduate students; by 1964–65 there were 862 students including 114 graduate students (Murphy 1987:273).

The SRC was created in 1953 with a good deal of external support from the Ford Foundation (Murphy 1987:114, 127). The Ford Foundation is a major American non-governmental organization which began in the 1930s and began to take an interest in affairs outside the US after the Second World War with the goal of supporting development efforts. It opened up a regional office in Beirut in 1952 and a country office in Cairo in 1957; in 1975 the regional office also moved to Cairo. In the 1950s and 1960s the Ford Foundation was beginning to feel its way with regard to development in the Arab world. Its consistent concern, however, was to see practical results from its grants. One might think that UNESCO might have funded the ethnological survey as it did the archaeology, but it did not. Nor did the university approach UNESCO.

In 1957 the SRC came under the direction of Dr. Laila el-Hamamsy, an anthropologist with a PhD from Cornell (1954). During the 1950s, the SRC sponsored a series of individual research projects, initiating research on urbanization in Egypt, as well as on rural resettlement. Both involved research teams. Many of the researchers were appointed as both teaching and research faculty (Murphy 1987:127–28).<sup>18</sup>

When the NES began, the SRC had already developed an experienced staff. Several of the research assistants had worked on previous SRC projects, notably interviewing migrants to the city for a project designed by Karen Peterson. Between August and December 1959, Peterson supervised two waves of interviews with migrants from the Delta to Cairo (Peterson 1971:563). Janet Abu-Lughod began her work on Cairo for the SRC in 1959,

and also drew from the same pool of research assistants (Abu-Lughod 1971). An earlier large-scale project was the study of industrialization in Alexandria in 1954–59, carried out with the Institute of Social Sciences at Alexandria University (el-Saaty and Hirabayashi 1959). However, the most direct predecessor of the NES was the involvement in the Egyptian American Rural Improvement Service (EARIS). EARIS itself began in 1952, and the SRC involvement in 1960. This included the study of resettlement from Egyptian villages to newly reclaimed areas near Fayoum and Alexandria (Quta and Abis) under the direction of Saad Gadalla and Alphonse Said (Murphy 1979:119; Johnson and Lintner 1985). As a major new project for the SRC, the NES was able to build on the organizational experience of these earlier projects. One departure of the NES, however, was to concentrate on qualitative research (participant observation) rather than surveys as in the earlier projects; this required a different style of record-keeping and analysis.

With this background, let us pick up the story of the NES itself. As the research in Old Nubia and elsewhere unfolded, the team tried to grasp and analyze a unique and multifaceted event, spread over several years, through empirical research. The team generated enormous amounts of quite diverse data and tried to reach some conclusions about the nature of Nubian society within the broader Egyptian framework, the resettlement process and its implications for the different components of the Nubian population, and the extent to which Nubian history continued to be relevant in the present. The team had to set up the research process, formulate questions, train staff, and in general arrange for the flow and recording of information. Then it had to reach conclusions. To this narrative we now turn.

## 2 Anthropological Encounters in Nubia

Ample scientific and pragmatic justification existed for salvage ethnography in Old Nubia. The project proposal stressed such issues as ecological adaptation and labor migration. We offered to be of help to those responsible for planning Nubian resettlement by providing information about the characteristics of Nubian society; we became a means of communication between administrators and administered. The more general humanistic issues—that a unique human culture should be described before it radically changed or disappeared—was perhaps less successfully communicated. . . . We think it significant that a record now exists of the culture and society of Egyptian Nubians before the High Dam and, like the historical documentation from the sites and antiquities of the area, will become part of the human heritage (Fernea 1978:xii–xiii).

Thus did the project director, Robert Fernea, sum up the project fifteen years after its completion. Here we go back to the beginning and follow the Nubian Ethnological Survey (NES) from its inception in 1960 to its conclusion in 1965, following the terminal conference in Aswan in January 1964. We present the research teams, introduce the framework, and set out some of the methodologies and conclusions.

### **Recruiting the Team**

Fernea joined the American University in Cairo (AUC) in 1959 upon completing his PhD in anthropology at the University of Chicago. His doctoral research had been on issues of irrigation and development in southern Iraq

(R. Fernea 1970). Initially he had joined AUC to teach and expand his experience of the Arab world. Once in Egypt he became aware of the project to build the Aswan High Dam and the cultural implications this would have for the population living in the inundation zone, with their distinct ethnic identity, including culture and language. He approached Laila el-Hamamsy with a proposal that the Social Research Center (SRC) undertake a study of the Nubians and their relocation, and she enthusiastically agreed.<sup>19</sup>

At first Fernea was simply looking for modest funding to allow him to accompany the archaeologists surveying monuments in Nubia (E. Fernea 1970:81). He turned to Professor John Wilson<sup>20</sup> of the University of Chicago for support. But when Wilson came to Cairo in late spring 1960 and met with Fernea and el-Hamamsy, it was decided to propose something much more ambitious than a simple exploratory trip. This would involve “salvage anthropology, but also cooperation with the ministry that’s resettling the Nubians, and training graduate students” (as summarized by Elizabeth Fernea 1970:94). Together El-Hamamsy and Fernea approached the Ford Foundation whose representative, John Hilliard, was a neighbor of Fernea’s. Hilliard and others at the Ford Foundation were intrigued by the idea, since it corresponded to their interest in fostering an understanding of the social implications of Egyptian development (see also Fernea and Fernea 1997:231). A proposal to this effect was prepared during fall 1960 and submitted to the Ford Foundation through its office in Cairo.

Fernea proposed the imagery of “nets and anchors.” The “nets” were the surveys of all Nubia, including its urban colonies as well as analyses of the Nubian community as a whole, while the “anchors” were the intensive community studies in different localities (eventually four). No text by Fernea uses this metaphor, but it was attributed to him by the Ford Foundation evaluator Harvey Hall, and it is particularly apt. In more formal language Fernea noted that, “Both the community study and the general survey approaches have been used in complementary fashion” (1963:122).

From the start there was a difference in emphasis between Fernea and the other anthropologists on the one hand and the Foundation officials on the other, with the former stressing the significance of the study for anthropological theory and practice, and the latter its importance for assisting in Egyptian development (see Chapter 3).

While waiting for the decision on the Ford grant, Fernea and an assistant, Karim Durzi, made an exploratory trip to Nubia. They left Cairo for Aswan by train in February 1961, hired a boat in Aswan, and proceeded upriver. Some sense of the drama of this trip can be gleaned from Elizabeth Fernea’s

account (1970:104–14): dubious boats hitting sunken trees, camping on the shores while surrounded by insects, difficulties of getting clean drinking water.

Fernea and Durzi traveled for two months and visited more than fifty communities. Fernea's preliminary report covered their observations on the history of the Nubians, the effects of the original Aswan Dam in 1902 and its two elevations in 1912 and 1933, the implications of various irrigation projects, social organization (kinship and marriage), local adjustments to the ecological changes since 1902, and the sense of values and moral superiority they detected. Throughout their report, and especially in the conclusion, they identified what they thought should be the focal points of research during fieldwork. These included: (1) patterns of variation, if any, among the three groups, (2) adaptations to ecological changes, (3) irrigation projects and related internal Nubian migration which might show how Nubians respond to the new relocation, (4) the preservation of culture, or conversely, possible social disorganization (5) in particular, how the community could be maintained when so many were away, and how the socialization of young males occurred. In a nutshell, the focus was on the identity of the Nubian community and its continuity. Fernea and Durzi concluded the report by noting, "The first step next fall will be to have a general discussion of these problems and others, seeking a general orientation for the research which will gain in specificity as the work gets underway." In the meantime, they emphasized that there was more detailed information in the field notes that were currently being cataloged according to Murdock's *Outline of Cultural Materials*.<sup>21</sup>

While Fernea and Durzi were away, the approval from the Ford Foundation came through, and serious planning could begin. One of the first steps was to locate senior staff and assistants for the fieldwork. The plan was to recruit a mixture of Egyptians and Americans, but in the end most senior staff were American. It seems that many were recruited through personal contacts. They came from some of the strongest anthropology programs in the US, and they already had substantial fieldwork experience. Thayer "Ted" Scudder, who had worked on the Kariba Dam resettlement project in Northern Rhodesia/Zambia for his PhD at Harvard (1960)—establishing a baseline for subsequent studies—was recruited for a year between African sojourns. Charles Callender from the University of Chicago, who had completed his PhD under Sol Tax on American Indian social organization (1958), was perhaps suggested by Tax. With Charles came his wife, Marie Furey, also trained in anthropology at the University of Chicago up to master's level. The letter of appointment AUC sent to Callender on May 31,

1961 may have been typical: “Yours is a joint assignment to our teaching staff and to research in the Social Research Center. The details of both will need clearance in Cairo. We will anticipate at least three years of service” (Callender archives, NAA).

Lucie Wood [Saunders] was recruited through Conrad Arensberg of Columbia University, where she had earned her PhD in 1959 with a library thesis on parallel cousin marriage among Arabs; in the end she decided not to join the Nubian project but to orient herself toward the study of a Delta village. Jane Philips, who came from Columbia with a PhD in anthropology based on medical anthropology research in Lebanon (1958), was also recruited. Peter Geiser, a sociologist from the University of Southern California (PhD, 1961), came to work on urban migration issues.

An example of how personal links came into play in the recruitment process is Scudder, whose experience in a comparable situation made him a desirable candidate. Scudder wrote (p.c., 2008), “I think my recruitment was initiated by Alan Horton who was aware of my pre-dam research in Northern Rhodesia and then supported by Bob Fernea who was an old friend dating back to both of us being awarded Danforth Fellowships during the few years that Danforth was interested in anthropologists who studied religion but were not religious. I was a post-doc at the London School of Economics in 60–61 and due back in Northern Rhodesia in 62–63, so Horton knew that I was interested in a one-year appointment elsewhere in Africa.” Alan Horton was dean of the graduate school at AUC from 1956 to 1961.<sup>22</sup>

In 1960–61 Scudder was working with Raymond Firth at the London School of Economics, a major center for anthropology in the UK. He was not only invited to join the AUC team in Nubia, but was also offered a post in the Sudan by Ian Gunnison, then at the University of Khartoum. One of his concerns in undertaking field research in Egypt was that he did not want to be separated for a long period from his wife and two young daughters; his time apart from them while doing his doctoral research in the Zambezi valley had been stressful. Thus part of his correspondence with Fernea was on the ways in which his research and family concerns could be accommodated; in the end Scudder and his family set up a household in the Cairo neighborhood of Maadi and he conducted several long field trips to interview people in the Nubian villages. He also supervised interviews of Nubians in Cairo for his sample. He taught at the AUC in the fall semester, where he was active in promoting some of the early master’s theses in anthropology. He did most of the fieldwork in the spring. His salary was \$6,500 plus local benefits.

The initial local staff members were drawn from the pool of experienced researchers at the SRC. Some of them had been students in social science courses at AUC; others came from Cairo University and other national universities.<sup>23</sup> Some had already worked on previous projects. For most of them, as for many other Egyptians at the time, Nubia was unknown territory with a considerable romantic aura.<sup>24</sup> Traveling there was an adventure, and it was also considered dangerous, and the families of the assistants were sometimes reluctant to let them join the project. Nawal el-Messiri's brother made an exploratory trip to confirm that it was safe for his sister, and Bahiga Haikal could only go after her sister Fayza had been there on an archaeological expedition. Fadwa el Guindi's mother objected but to no avail.<sup>25</sup>

Fernea and Hamamsy shared responsibility for the management of the project. Hamamsy was responsible for the direction of the SRC and overall supervision, and Fernea oversaw the survey itself. The senior researchers were left with considerable freedom of action to carry out their research as they saw fit. Fernea was conscious that they were all pretty much equal in experience, and did not feel comfortable trying to direct them closely. Later in the project Hamamsy would occasionally convene the junior researchers in Cairo for a debriefing. One has the impression that the junior researchers related first to the field director (Fernea, Callender, or Dr. John G. Kennedy) who was their immediate supervisor, and then separately to Hamamsy as the overall Egyptian director of the SRC for certain personnel and personal issues. There was clearly some overall agreement on the strategy of taking and analyzing notes intended to produce some uniformity and complementarity. This required a fair amount of office work in Cairo: transcribing, translating, typing, coding, and so on, and that had to be coordinated as well. At the peak of activity, several secretaries at the SRC devoted much of their time to this project.

### **The Research: Nets and Anchors**

Laila El-Hamamsy issued a "general progress report" on December 16, 1961, shortly after the NES's inception.<sup>26</sup> She noted that work on the NES began in fall 1960 with library research and the two-month preliminary field trip described above. On the strength of the field trip, the team decided that "The most comprehensive picture of the Egyptian Nubian population could be obtained by dividing the survey into two major parts: one dealing with Nubians living in Nubia, and the other with migrant Nubians living in Cairo, since migration to northern cities has, for many years, been an important factor in Nubian life." The first aspect of the study was in turn divided into three 'anthropological' segments. The first, in the Kenuzi-speaking region,

was undertaken by Philips, the second, in the Arabic-speaking region, by Furey, and the third, in the Fadija, by Robert Fernea. Although the three regions had a basically similar culture, there was variation due to ecological changes following the construction of the old dam. The centers for these three studies were respectively Dahmit (Kenuz), al-Malki (Arab), and Ballana (Fadija). Dahmit, a northern district, was heavily impacted by the old dam and its elevations; Ballana in the south was only marginally affected, and al-Malki in the center had an intermediate position. "Each camp is equipped with a motorboat to facilitate transportation up and down the Nile, a kerosene refrigerator and other necessary household equipment, and transistor tape recorders to permit the recording of interviews."

Hamamsy also expressed the hope (which was not to be realized) that Ahmed Abu-Zeid of Alexandria University would join the project in summer 1961 to "study Nubian communities which were resettled in Nubia after the construction of the last Aswan dam" (that is, after the 1933 elevation).<sup>27</sup> Abu-Zeid did recommend to his student Abdul Hamid el Zein that he switch from Alexandria University to join the NES, in part to avoid factionalism in Alexandria. In the end the only faculty members from an Egyptian university who had extensive involvement in the project were the husband-and-wife team of Mohamed Riad and Kawthar Abdel Rasoul, cultural geographers and anthropologists from Ain Shams University (see below).

### **Nets (Surveys)**

Two of the "nets" were an ecological survey of Old Nubia and a survey of the Nubian colonies in urban Egypt. Both of these were connected with the strong pattern of migration of Nubian men to work in Egyptian cities, frequently in personal service work. They both began in 1961–62.

In January 1962 a group of four researchers (Scudder, Geiser, Ezz-el-Din Attiya, and El Zein) sailed up the Nile from Aswan to the Sudanese border in a felucca. Their task was to conduct a census in geographically dispersed settlements that would serve as a basis for two samples. Scudder wanted to draw a sample of eight settlements for an ecological and economic survey of Old Nubia prior to resettlement, and Geiser wanted one of labor migrants for a study in Cairo. To reach this goal the team visited each of the sixty-six settlements identified from the 1960 census for sampling, and enumerated the households with respect to which the urban sample was eventually established (Geiser 1986:10; see map in Fernea 1963:122). From respondents in the sampled communities, Geiser compiled a list of migrants in Cairo who formed the basis of his sample.

The individuals Geiser identified were then interviewed in Cairo in the spring of 1962 by a team of research assistants from the SRC supplemented by advanced students from other local universities (Geiser 1986:11–12). They identified 1,125 respondents and interviewed 747; by eliminating cases where the list included more than one male per household and some other cases, the team arrived at a final sample total of 427 males (*ibid*: 12). This sample then produced data on urban employment, education, family relations, and links to the home communities (see Geiser 1986). Meanwhile, other studies of urban Nubians were proceeding, with Geiser as the overall director. Work in Cairo aimed to determine the ways in which the various groups of Nubians living in the capital were regularly associated with each other, with Nubians in Nubia, and with non-Nubians in Cairo. Callender studied the socio-economic organization of migrant Nubians, mostly from Dahmit (see below), while Horton focused specifically on the migrants from Ballana to complement the Fernea field study. Geiser also undertook a study elucidating the creation of myths to rationalize changes in migrant values. Three young Egyptians would study various aspects of family and social life: Nadia Youssef the changes in traditional family roles, Najwa Shukairy the patterns of mutual social obligations, notably around funerals, and Nawal el-Messiri the interactions between Nubians and others during assimilation into Cairo life. Shukairy's research led to a master's thesis in anthropology, while el-Messiri shifted her topic to Old Nubia, as described below. Youssef, the most experienced, already had a master's in oriental studies, but drafted a paper on her family roles research.<sup>28</sup>

Scudder and el Zein returned to Old Nubia in the low-water period of June 1962 with one of the project's motorboats to complete the ecological and economic survey. Scudder's sample villages were different from Geiser's. Concentrating on eight settlements that had been carefully selected to reflect labor migration rates for absentee adult males, they traveled from Aswan to the Sudanese border and back (Scudder 2007:7). They remained in each settlement as long as it took to interview all the men. Scudder and his assistants (Wafiya Mishriki and Ibrahim Nimr) also interviewed men from these villages in Cairo, Alexandria, and elsewhere, so that the overall sample included both men in Nubia and labor migrants. Scudder argues that this sample is the only one that represented the totality of the Nubian population: stay-at-homes and migrants. He calculated that the team interviewed at least two-thirds of the original list. The preliminary results of the survey and other research material were presented in Scudder's paper on ecology and labor migration rates at the 1964 Aswan symposium (1966).

On a number of occasions in the years that followed, Scudder attempted a restudy. In his 1966 paper he noted, "It is of great importance that the communities and households studied prior to relocation be periodically restudied" (1966:139). But this proved difficult. Working in 1980 with Hussein Fahim, Scudder recruited Fikri Abdul Wahab and Zeinab Gamal to track down the earlier respondents but nothing came of this, and in 2007 he attempted the same feat with another Nubian researcher, Maher Ali Maher Othman (Habbob). As of 2008 the analysis of these interviews remains incomplete. In proceeding in this manner, Scudder was trying to replicate a structure he had used successfully with the Tonga in Zambia (Scudder and Colson 1979:237).

### **Anchors**

The anchors were the community studies, of which four were envisaged. Due to the slow recruitment of leading personnel these were started at different times.

### **The Fadija Zone: Ismailiya–Ballana**

In addition to the post of project director, Fernea initiated research in Ismailiya village of Ballana. Ballana was the southernmost Egyptian district on the west bank of the Nile, and Ismailiya lay approximately three kilometers south of the Abu Simbel temple. Being very far upstream, Ballana had been relatively unaffected by the flooding due to the old Aswan dam, and retained a traditional agricultural system, albeit modified by the introduction of a government pumping project in the 1940s. One of the largest Nubian districts, it was thus a relatively intact community. The 1960 Egyptian census records 5,100 people living in thirty villages. This includes groups of people from the north, Kenuz and Fadija, who had settled in the district to take advantage of the fertile land and the pumping project. The names of some of the villages suggest that they were founded by people from Korosko, al-Diwan, Abu Handal, Qatta, and Ibrim—all Fadija districts downstream.

Members of the team (Fernea, Durzi, Haikal, Afaf el-Dib, el Zein) variously resided in Ismailiya during the winter and spring of 1961–62,<sup>29</sup> and el Zein returned there for several months in fall 1962 to collect data as per Fernea's instructions.

Durzi remembers, "I was the economist in a multidisciplinary team in Ballana. Bob Fernea and I were the 'permanent' members of the team, and others joined us along the way for varying lengths of time. Given the summer

heat, we worked from October to March or April . . . . Our living conditions were tolerable. We rented the ‘house’ of a man who had previous experience as a professional cook in Cairo.” Transport between the settlements was often by one of the expedition’s motorboats, but sometimes on foot or by donkey. The research site was near the Abu Simbel temple, which was also a stop for the post boat. The boat brought some tourists, and the people of Ballana tried to interest them in local crafts and wares.

Immediately downstream of Ismailiya and before the Abu Simbel boat landing was a smaller Ballana village, Ard Moz, from which was drawn Scudder’s sample for the study of labor migration. This name also figures in Fernea’s research, and Elizabeth Fernea identifies it as the place where the Fernea family lived.

Haikal and el Dib were also among the assistants in Ismailiya. El Dib was with the team from the beginning, while Haikal joined the Ballana team after she was hired by the SRC at the end of 1961. El Dib and Haikal would often visit families together, though each took separate notes. Haikal eventually prepared a paper on the marriage and kinship system for the 1964 Aswan symposium; essentially on the basis of this paper Fernea gives her credit for clarifying the role of the *nog* (kindred) in Ballana life (1973:20). The people of Ismailiya recognized that Haikal was “the daughter of a pasha” and may have given her additional respect. As with any research, certain individuals stand out as key informants, and Haikal remembers that two such people were Naima and Abdallah, both of whom figure in *A View of the Nile* (interview, 2009; E.W. Fernea 1970:xii).

In January 1962 Elizabeth Fernea joined her husband in Ballana (E.W. Fernea 1970) for a period of about two months. She was accompanied by her two young children, and was pregnant. To help care for the children, she recruited two young American women from Cairo, first Susan Spector and later Beryl Slocum, both of whom also participated in the research life.<sup>30</sup> She has provided an account of her stay in Nubia (1970:119–264, later reprinted in E. Fernea and R. Fernea 1991:27–117; see also E. Fernea and R. Fernea 1997:231–39). Formatted as a series of stories dramatizing the encounter of Nubian and American personalities, the narrative in fact exemplifies Nubian family life: the relations between men and women, the concern over the health of children and others, etiquette and hospitality, marriage and death. In particular, it highlights the existential situation of the women, who often remain in the village while the men are migrant workers. In retrospect, Elizabeth Fernea claimed this text as an early example of a different, experimental kind of ethnography that brought

the researcher and the researched into the same narrative, and noted that her focus on documenting the role of women and children filled a gap in the categories of the Human Relations Area Files (HRAF) (E. Fernea and R. Fernea 1991:2).

Elizabeth Fernea also describes the rounds of visits to neighboring women that she made with one or more of the assistants.

At first together and then often separately, as we developed our individual friendships, we visited the women of Erd-Moz and they visited us. We sat together in the courtyards or on the tawny, sun-drenched dune before the houses, listening, talking, trying to understand the people among whom we were living, to record the techniques and skills that the women had developed to deal successfully with home life on the Upper Nile (1970:182).

She also describes a rhythm in which Robert Fernea and the assistants would start off in the morning to interview, then return to the headquarters for an afternoon gathering over tea that also served as a debriefing session (1970:191, 199). But E. Fernea also took part in the ceremonial life and took her own conventional notes, which can be illustrated by the short published extract recounting a visit to a mourning ceremony that she made with el Dib (R. Fernea and E. Fernea 1972:398–99).

The entire scene and the experience affected us both very strongly: the formalized weeping, one woman with another, in pairs, like bereaved sisters or mothers and daughters; the court crowded with women, clad in black but with their heads uncovered, an unheard-of thing in this part of the world. The hot sun beat down upon us, on the mud floor of the court, on the black garments of the women, and on their smudged hair and sweating tear-stained faces, while the strange chanting kept on like a song, a humming, a song of sorrow and anguish, of defeat and loss. No Koranic readings took place, the *Fatiha* was not recited, yet the women themselves told us later that they felt this to be a truly religious ceremony.

As the research was getting under way, the objectives became clearer: to provide an ethnographic description of a traditional Mahasi-speaking community (Fadija) presented within the framework of a functional analysis of the social and economic organization. Researchers were also concerned with the link between the relatively successful agriculture and labor migration

on the one hand, and on the other the effects of the occupational specialization of the absent males. To identify these links and effects the team collected data on income from agriculture and transfer payments. The team also sought to elucidate the relations between the Fadija and other groups present, including Kenuz who had immigrated to the area when their homes farther north were flooded and smaller groups of 'Ababda or Hallab. The method followed was typical of anthropology: participant observation and informal conversations supplemented by some formal interviews and the collection of genealogies. "The informal conversations take place constantly through visits to the homes of the villagers and during the frequent visits which the men of Ismailiya pay the investigators. The technique generally employed is to let conversations range freely from topic to topic with questions to informants following up matters of research interest. Notes and recording are frequently taken of such conversations and later transcribed as regular field notes."<sup>31</sup>

Durzi sensed that some men not only talked freely, but too freely; he remembers being embarrassed by their revelations. In addition the investigators would attend local ceremonies and other sites of activity. The scratch notes taken would be transcribed later as regular field notes. Durzi observes, "We took notes extensively, based on conversations and observations. . . . I was a diligent writer of notes." The notes were typed up back at the SRC, if necessary after translation.<sup>32</sup>

On a more systematic level, the team undertook a survey of households and a census of land and other property, and started a collection of life histories. The genealogies taken completed four major families in the village, including over six hundred persons, dead and alive. The information thus collected provided the backdrop to the understanding of political and economic relations within the village as well as the local system of inheritance and tenure. The research approach was substantially influenced by British Africanist social anthropology, based on the concept of the 'corporate group,' even though in the end Fernea was skeptical of the idea (Fernea 1966).<sup>33</sup> He instead stressed the network of reciprocal obligations, shared resources, and cross-cutting ties as key to the local social organization, arguing that the relative absence of lineage structures distinguished the Fadija from the Kenuz to the north (Fernea 1973, 2004).

Durzi summed up the research effort in Ballana: "Yes, the survey as a record of a vanishing society was foremost in our minds. We were documenting the life of the Nubians in their natural habitat, and how they adjusted to their environment."

By summer 1962 Fernea, in a brief note in *Current Anthropology*, was able to remark: “As the project has developed, both the community study and the general survey approaches have been used in complementary fashion,” and, “These studies have been oriented along the traditional lines of folk-community analysis, but with special attention to the problems unique to each area” (1963:122–23). Fernea somewhat optimistically concluded his note by saying, “The 1962–1963 academic year will be devoted to completing the remaining research and to writing up the results of the entire survey. This phase of the project should be completed by the fall of 1963.”

### **Adindan**

After research in Ballana had been concluded, el Zein returned to Adindan on the opposite bank of the Nile for six months in 1963–64 to carry out research for his master’s thesis at AUC on the waterwheel irrigation system (1966; see also Fernea 1973:18–22). This study did not focus on community social organization or resettlement but rather on a social-organizational problem. The Dar al-Salam team visited el Zein, and found him well settled. In Ballana they made contact with the key informants who had worked with Fernea’s team and found them helpful (Kennedy 1978:xviii). El Zein had also contributed to the fieldwork in Ballana in 1962 when he figured in some of Abdul Fattah Eid’s photographs.

The traditional agriculture in Adindan had not been much impacted by the old Aswan dam. El Zein’s study (1966) is presented as an outgrowth of his work on Scudder’s 1962 survey and aims to establish how it was that the land in Adindan had not been as severely subdivided through the Islamic inheritance rules as elsewhere in Nubia. El Zein quotes Scudder’s conclusion that land fragmentation caused by inheritance had led to the abandonment of agriculture in many areas. Why then was Adindan an exception? In brief, el Zein’s answer was that although land could be subdivided, irrigation water could not, and so there was an interest in preventing subdivision below a certain level. To achieve this, the people of Adindan passed the inheritance to the senior heir rather than dividing it (1966:9). El Zein proceeded to work out the relationship between soil type, irrigation technology, and social organization, stressing that the interlocking patterns provided for stability.<sup>34</sup> Thus he noted that, “The waterwheel is potentially a cohesive force in Adindan: it establishes relationships of interdependence among individuals and groups. Its existence makes clear to the people the fact that continued subsistence means cooperation—even though conflicts do break out over the wheel and its use” (1966:84).

El Zein's choice of irrigation as a topic may have been overdetermined. Fernea of course had researched irrigation in his previous field study in Iraq (Fernea 1963, 1970). El Zein had been a student of Abu-Zeid's at Alexandria University, and Abu-Zeid remembers recommending to el Zein that he focus on irrigation to complement his own work in Kharga Oasis (Abu-Zeid 1963). El Zein's widow Laila remembers that he was personally quite fascinated by the irrigation and waterwheel system and may have focused on it to the exclusion of other topics. Abu-Zeid also recalls that el Zein's work was conducted under his supervision, by special arrangement, although he was not formally responsible for the thesis as he was out of the country at the time. El Zein's acknowledgment of Abu-Zeid in his thesis is especially cordial: "Dr. Abu-Zeid has guided me in my subject with a helpfulness which has far exceeded that of the ordinary student-teacher relation." At the same time, his resolution of the problem reflects a sensitive understanding of social organization and the connectivity of diverse factors, including ecological ones, that reflects Scudder's influence.<sup>35</sup>

#### **Al-Malki**

Several villages in central Nubia were inhabited by Arabic-speaking Nubians belonging to the 'Aliqat tribe. Holding a BA in sociology from Cairo University, Asaad Nadim was hired to go to this part of Nubia with Furey.<sup>36</sup> He and Abdul Wahab were each given LE10 to outfit themselves for the field stay and were taught how to manage the motorboats. They first made a trip upriver as far as Abu Simbel, where Fernea was working with Karim Durzi. Asaad remembers that Durzi was anxious to leave so he could migrate to Canada, but Fernea didn't want to release him until he had a substitute. Durzi was hoping they would stay in Ballana, but they returned north. Nadim and Furey disembarked at al-Malki (initially they had selected another district, but this one was proposed locally as more suitable). They rented a house as a field station, but soon Furey developed an illness and chose to leave. Nadim was willing to stay behind, but Furey would not agree to this.

Nadim had established contact with a schoolteacher in al-Malki named Mohammed Ibrahim Hilali and soon began asking him questions through the mail. Eventually Nadim used the answers to his questions to prepare a paper and later a master's thesis for Cairo University's Institute of African Studies (Nadim 1963). Because thesis research was required to be outside Egypt, a dissertation on al-Malki required special permission, but this was granted.

Nadim and el-Messiri were married in the summer of 1963 and went to al-Malki to continue fieldwork. The focus of their research was kinship. Altogether Nadim worked on al-Malki for a period of nearly two years, ending when the population was evacuated in late 1963. This included one stay over the summer season when there were no boats because of low water. But summer was also the marriage season so it was significant. El-Messiri remembers that the field experience in al-Malki was more difficult than Dahmit (see below) because she was considered a married woman, 'Asaad's wife,' and so had to eat leftovers in the second sitting with the women, whereas in earlier research in Dahmit she and Fadwa el Guindi had been fed simultaneously with the men, albeit separately. As a result el-Messiri ate poorly in al-Malki, missing out, in particular, on meat, because the men ate it all. El-Messiri remembers that there was no strong difference between the people of al-Malki and of Dahmit; the real contrast was between these two groups and the Fadija.<sup>37</sup>

### **The Kenuz Zone: Dahmit**

Dahmit is in the northern part of Nubia, about thirty kilometers south of Aswan. Research among the Kenuz in Dahmit was carried out first by Philips in 1961–62 and then later by Callender in 1962–63, each with a supporting team of assistants. In 1963–64 Armgard Grauer, a German anthropology student, also worked in Dahmit (Grauer 1968), and later on the resettled Dahmit community became the focus of the thesis of the French anthropologist Frédérique Fogel (1997). Dahmit was heavily impacted by the first Aswan dam and its raisings.

Philips began work in Dahmit with the assistance of Abdul Wahab, who had been born there and retained family links, as both his grandfathers lived in Dahmit. He was a fresh sociology graduate from Cairo University. Philips was in the field for several months in the winter of 1961–62, but no written work resulted. Some of her field notes, covering the period November 1961 to February 1962, are in the Callender collection of the National Anthropological Archives (NAA) of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., as are some from the same period by Abdul Wahab. El Guindi noted that Philips had a background in medical anthropology and distributed medicine to the villagers; her thesis for Columbia had been based on research in Lebanon (Philips 1958). She was also interested in female circumcision and used to ask the women to allow her to examine their pudenda. El Guindi found some of her activities strange (see el Guindi 2006), but overall Philips left a good impression.

Callender joined AUC in the fall of 1961. In early 1962 he became involved in the NES through a study of Nubian migrants in Cairo and Alexandria. He focused on migrants from Dahmit. Interviews were carried out by a variety of researchers (including Abdul Wahab, el-Messiri, and Zeinab Gamal) and were then translated into English by Aziza Rashad; transcripts of many of these interviews are in the Callender papers in the NAA. The translations soon became a bone of contention between Callender and the SRC (or, more precisely, el-Hamamsy). Callender noted that Rashad did not translate all the material, as the interviews were piling up faster than they could be translated. Both Abdul Wahab and Gamal were still interviewing after Rashad left the center. The agreement was that Rashad would dictate an oral translation while Callender would take notes "on yellow legal pads." Later he typed up the material, while reorganizing it. As Callender finished typing each interview, he gave the original pages to the office at the SRC. This was done before he went to Nubia, that is, in October 1962. Later he decided to reorganize the material, and retyped many of the interviews, leaving the first typed versions with the SRC. Presumably this second typed version is the one in the NAA. There is no sign that this material was ever analyzed. Rough drafts in the Callender archives show that Callender tried to find a way to analyze this voluminous material, but apparently never found the right one.<sup>38</sup> In October 1962 Callender took over the field study Philips had initiated in Dahmit the previous year. "Dr. Jane Phillips . . . generously made her census data available, and our study profited greatly from the intense goodwill she had engendered toward anthropologists" (Callender and el Guindi 1971:v). He kept Abdul Wahab as an assistant and also recruited el-Messiri and el Guindi. Omar Abdel Hamid, another assistant, was there part of the time. El-Messiri was a veteran of the urban interviews of the previous year. The team remained in the field until May 1963, and el Guindi and Abdul Wahab made visits later in 1963 until the villagers were relocated to the new settlements.

Callender noted that el Guindi was "an excellent observer who could work well with either sex, she rapidly developed a very close rapport with the women of Dahmit that contributed much to the success of our study" (Callender ms, p. v). Of Abdul Wahab he commented, "His knowledge of the Kenuz language and his capacity for sympathetic but very objective observations were, like his membership in the dominant lineage of the Mehannab tribe, of great help" (Callender ms, p.vi). Callender was initially keen on the involvement of el-Messiri, but later turned cool. El-Messiri was, however, the one who turned her Dahmit field research into an academic product, her master's thesis at AUC.<sup>39</sup>

The date for the evacuation of Dahmit had been set for September 1963, less than a year later, meaning the team had to complete the research as quickly as possible. It was a form of ‘salvage ethnography’ (Callender and el Guindi 1971:86). Callender noted that because of the limitations of time, the focus was on social organization, and the shortage of time and means of transport also limited the research to areas near the research station on the east bank of the Nile.

The team lived together in close quarters and in intimate contact with the people of Dahmit. The tension was broken by trips to Aswan by boat or by visits from members of the broader team. Each of the researchers worked somewhat independently and took separate notes. El Guindi focused on the women while el-Messiri was concerned with the ceremonial life (saints’ shrines) that eventually became her master’s thesis. El Guindi reported that the researchers worked together as a team, taking, translating, and transcribing notes until midnight. In fact they only had one typewriter, so that must have been a bottleneck. Abdul Wahab, el Guindi, and el-Messiri took notes in diary form, but there are also other forms of notes—genealogies and location maps, in particular. Callender himself also took notes.<sup>40</sup>

Fikri and Callender often worked together, reconstructing the physical history of the community (describing, for example, what the areas looked like that had been inundated by the earlier elevations, especially when lower water revealed some of the remnants). Abdul Wahab’s notes of November 7, 1962,<sup>41</sup> read:

After breakfast I went with Charles and Fathey Bahr [a key informant] to map the houses that were drowned after the Elevation of 1933. The traces of these houses are stones outlining the rooms and court of each house. They can be seen when the water goes down, and are used for agriculture in summer. These plots are planted by the owners of the houses, or their heirs. Some of the women accompanied us, thinking that we would give them land at Komombo to replace these plots. Each woman asked us to write down her house or that of her father. Charles was drawing a map of them. They persisted in this misconception, even after Fathey Bahr explained what we were doing. The women were able to give Fathey the name of the owner of each house, and his heirs.

El Guindi and the other Egyptian researchers felt they were caught in two cross-cultural situations at once—between the American and Egyptian

researchers, and between themselves and the Egyptian Nubians—so it was a delicate balancing act. This was certainly in part a language issue, since Callender only knew English and the Dahmitis only Arabic or Matoki. As such the field assistants were the link, and had to explain each to the other. The sometimes eccentric behavior of Callender was a factor here; even more so the behavior of his wife, Marie Furey, on those occasions when she was present. In his own notes Callender gives some examples of his expressions of annoyance at the behavior of the villagers. Some people felt that Callender was a difficult person, but el Guindi and Abdul Wahab judged that he was a good person beneath a rough exterior and for this reason were prepared to work with him.

El Guindi had been relatively inexperienced when she entered the field, but as a researcher was encouraged to observe everything and she soon caught on. So much so that she even once managed to get herself into a bridal chamber to observe the deflowering. Along with other members of the team, she danced at weddings and on other occasions, prompting some of the Americans to complain that they had tilted too far toward participation rather than observation (“participation sometimes exceeding our expectations,” Callender remarked drily, ms: vi). But el Guindi noted that in a sense they were obliged to get along, because of the isolation of Dahmit. El Guindi was particularly close to a woman named Fahima Abdallah Abdel Hamid, who was her ‘key informant’ (see below). El Guindi maintained contact with Callender for about ten years after he returned to the US in 1963; his file contains numerous letters from her, reporting initially on the affairs of the SRC and the Nubian project.

El-Messiri had been intrigued by the enthusiasm of her Dahmit informants in Cairo for the saints’ festivals, and had already determined that she was going to write her master’s thesis on the saint cult, but she did not keep separate notes on that. In fact she does not remember handing over her notes (though she must have submitted some because they are in the NAA file), and this corresponds to Callender’s complaint that she owed notes to the team file, that is, to him.

El-Messiri’s work on the saint cult in Dahmit was clearly situated within a framework of structural-functionalism, citing Radcliffe-Brown and Malinowski (1978:98). She was interested both in how institutions responded to the needs of the individual and the role of recurrent activity in social life—in other words, the ways in which any practice contributes to the continuity of society. Thus the saint cult both provided a way to symbolize the lineages and other forms of descent, and helped allay some of the anxieties that individuals

might have because of the uncertainties of their lives (1978:197). El-Messiri also points out that what is functional from the point of view of one institution might be dysfunctional from another: lineage solidarity may undercut village solidarity.

Callender relied so much on el Guindi's notes for the monograph on life crisis rituals that he made her co-author, noting "that it seems only right to include her as junior author, although the writing is my own" (Callender & el Guindi 1971:v). This was in defiance of El-Hamamsy's instructions that research assistants should not be made co-authors unless they helped in analyzing and drafting the material (El-Hamamsy letter to Callender of November 2, 1965, NAA). El Guindi later used some of the material from this monograph when rethinking the issue of female circumcision (2006); the field notes may have originally been hers.

On February 1, 1963, the Dahmit team was visited by the Ferneas and the Hilliards. In her notes el Guindi commented:

The village was almost deserted today because men and women have crossed to the West for their identity cards. Those who remained here showed great interest in the coming of the mudir (knowing that Dr. Fernea and the representative of the Ford Foundation were arriving with Charles and Fikri this morning.) When the children heard the motor boat, they all ran downhill, greeting Charles and the newcomers very warmly by singing and clapping. Women stood around watching, and were also very warm in their welcome.

We took them to the house of Hajj Ahmed Gomaa to see the paintings of his mandara. Then we went on to the school, which was locked because today is Friday. Zakeya Mustafa brought the keys and opened the school for us to look around the classrooms. Then we passed the owd [shaduf] of Zalikha Ahmed Abu Zeid, worked it a little, and went on. The children followed us all the way.

When they left, women asked questions about Mrs. Fernea and Mrs. Hilliard: whether they are wives, or "just like that", and whose is whose.

Two of the main contacts in Dahmit for the research team were Fahima Abdallah and Fathey Bahr. At some point after leaving the field Callender wrote up a series of notes on their informants, and this is how he described these two:

**Fahima Abdallah** was in her late 20s. She was a Gerbab, and owned a house in Shemshi, but had to come with Aisha; her mother (deceased) was Aisha's daughter.

Fikri's father's family hated her: I'm not sure why, but I think it began the year before with Jane, whom they accused of favoring Fahima. Probably the same thing happened with Jane as with us: Fahima is the kind of person whom an anthropologist discovers with delight, and whose help can be invaluable. She was treated by respect by everyone else, including men. She spoke fluent Arabic, and was one of the few women who could read and write; other women came to her with their letters. She offered to come with Fadwa on interviews so that she could translate for women whose Arabic was slight or non-existent; and not only did she translate very well, but she also grasped the plan of the interview immediately, and she kept the interviewees from wandering off the subject. At any meetings, she kept track of all the women present so that later she could give their names, tribes, and villages.

Fahima and her husband, Mohamed Nokut, were separated, although not divorced. They never liked each other. The second time she was pregnant, he sent her back to Dahmit from Alex for the birth, and never sent for her to come back. Although he continued to send money each month, they had not seen each other for 7 years. (Later, after we left, he finally came to Dahmit, but she threw him out of her house so that he had to divorce her.)

Her children were Sabry, who was 10, and Abdel Nasr, who was 7. Fahima was particularly close to Fadwa, and so it was difficult for another, such as Nawal, to work with her. Like many key informants she appears as something of an outsider.

**Fathey Bahr**<sup>42</sup> worked for us as a suffragi in the proper sense of the word — i.e., someone who waits at table rather than one who cooks. His own conception of his role was much broader — he thought he was responsible for our welfare, safety, etc. Whenever we spent a night away from the village he accompanied us; if we went to another nahia, he came along and always made the arrangements about our sleeping quarters; and he often accompanied us on shorter trips. More than once, when a man was suspicious of us or afraid of us, Fathey tried to explain what we were doing.

Besides his salary, he received a monthly salary from the government as *ghafir* or watchman, a position which he equated with the role of policeman. Unlike most of the other men, he actually farmed on a fairly large scale.

Although he was at least forty, everyone regarded him as the young man of the village, and this was how he saw himself.

Although he was one of our main informants, his reliability was erratic. I don't think that he ever consciously lied to us. His information about matters of fact that fell within his area of knowledge was usually completely reliable. The bias entered whenever he talked about how things should be. I'm not writing this well. One example that particularly struck me were his frequent complaints about the kind of improper behavior that has become general among Nubian women, and how he and the other men were going to take steps to remedy this. He complained about women who spoke Arabic, who did not stay in their houses, who were not governed entirely by their husbands. Yet there were certain women whom he obviously admired—Rabia Abdel Sayed of Koga, Fahima Abdallah of Gama, and Harbeya Mohamed of Almanyā—all of whom were characterized by the kind of behavior he inveighed against; in fact, this was also true of his sister Aisha, whom he liked and respected. I don't think he realized the contradiction here—in fact, I don't think that any of the men in Dahmit did, since these were the women they married when they were able to marry as they wished.<sup>43</sup>

The same theme of male–female relations was recorded in this note by el-Messiri from February 12, 1963, which also gives an indication of how men anticipated the new circumstances:

All three [men] agreed that when they go to Komombo they won't permit their women to wear anything but black. When women go to Aswan, they wear black; this will be a similar situation. They will keep their gold, but will never wear it outside the house. Ahmad Mustafa added that they won't permit the women to put plates on the walls of the houses, because usually it is the men who buy the tea-sets, and the women spoil them by taking the plates, leaving the cups.

Several publications came out of the Dahmit research. El-Messiri researched the saints' shrines for her master's thesis, a version of which was published in *Nubian Ceremonial Life* (Kennedy 1978). El Guindi's paper on river spirits also appeared in this volume. As noted, Callender and el Guindi published a book entitled *Life-Crisis Rituals Among the Kenuz* (1971). Callender wrote a paper on Kenuz social organization, detailing the analysis of one of the major tribes, the Mehannab, which appeared in the proceedings of the Aswan conference (Callender 1966). The paper clearly reflects the influence of the work of contemporary British social

anthropologists unraveling lineage structures in Africa. By the early 1970s Callender had drafted a book-length manuscript focusing on the lineage structure which remained unpublished (NAA, Callender ms, copy in AUC archives). Callender aimed to include not only the one thousand residents of Dahmit in his analysis but also the four thousand non-residents, arguing that the social structural features and processes had to be understood within this wider group. Callender and el Guindi noted (1971:4), "The residents of the district were overwhelmingly dependent on migrant relatives for economic support. Nevertheless, Dahmit was a well-integrated and efficiently functioning society, generally untouched by the kind of disintegration these circumstances might produce. Its residents maintained their culture at a rather high level of intensity." Social organization reflected a balance between the informal ties of residence and the formal structure of lineage or tribe. The former were more important for the women, the latter for the men. It seems likely his standard of reference was the situation of American Indians.

Apart from the NES study, Dahmit was also the site, before the evacuation, of PhD field research by Grauer (later Goo-Grauer) whose main interest was combining anthropology with aesthetics and art, with special reference to the house decorations and façades. Grauer's first contact with Nubia was in 1961, and after brief stays in 1962 and 1963 she was awarded a nine-month grant from the German Academic Exchange Service that covered 1963–64 (Grauer 1968:I). Grauer resided in the Dahmit hamlet of Meks, where she knew the family of a man who had been a cook at the German Archaeological Institute in Cairo, but she had traveled upriver as far as Wadi Halfa in the Sudan. Grauer did not know any of the SRC researchers in the field, since their field stays did not overlap, but met some when she attended the conference in January 1964. She did not present a paper at the conference, but she was the co-author of a paper with Kennedy on river spirits included in *Nubian Ceremonial Life*.<sup>44</sup> Later on she stayed briefly in New Dahmit. Grauer also documented folklore, folk tales, and other linguistic material, and was interested in the Kenuz language. She returned to Nubia for more research in 2009.

Grauer remained in Dahmit until the final evacuation in March 1964, and traveled with the villagers on the boat to Shallal.<sup>45</sup> The residents were apprehensive about the move and dismayed at the sight of the new village. They had wanted to bring valuable wood from the window and door frames and from the roofs, but the soldiers forbade this, despite vociferous argument. See a similar story from the village of al-Dirr (Hohenwart 1965:47).

In the village, just before leaving, Grauer watched a powerful old lady, a *sheikha*, say goodbye to the water spirits in the river by bringing a container of food to the riverbank for a personal ceremony.

#### **Dar al-Salam, or Kanuba (1963–64): An Earlier Relocation**

Kennedy (PhD, UCLA, 1961), who had recently completed a thesis on the Tarahumara Indians of Mexico, was recruited in 1962 “to study one of the Nubian communities that had been previously resettled between Aswan and Luxor as a result of the prior raisings of the Aswan dam” (1978:xvii). Kennedy’s interests were at the intersection of anthropology and psychiatry.

The field study was initiated in early 1963. The first step was to select one of the several possible communities. Kennedy and Fahim visited the research village near Daraw in late January 1963: “My assistant Hussein Fahim and I entered Kanuba for the first time around 2 p.m. on a sun-drenched afternoon in January 1963. . . .” (1977:3). Eventually the choice fell on that village, and the study continued for fourteen months (with a break in the summer of 1963).<sup>46</sup> Dar al-Salam, presented under the pseudonym of “Kanuba” in the published literature, contained people from several villages of Old Nubia, and notably people of both language groups. The settlers included predominantly Fadija speakers from Diwan and Kenuz speakers from Abu Hor. Kennedy called it a “conglomerate village” (1978:xxiii). The first settlers had come to Dar al-Salam in 1934, nearly thirty years before the fieldwork. They chose to come as a group, and used their compensation money from the second elevation to buy suitable land: they relocated themselves.

During the first phase, Kennedy and his team, including Samiha El Katsha and later Sohair Mehanna in addition to Fahim and sometimes Abdel Hamid, lived in Daraw and visited in the village. It took a while for them to be sufficiently accepted in the village so that they could establish a household there. Fahim was a graduate of Cairo University with a master’s from Alexandria University in social work. El Katsha and Mehanna were AUC graduates with some prior experience of fieldwork. Kennedy was accompanied by his wife Sylvia and two young children.

The team also used this period to visit Old Nubia, and in particular the districts whence Kanubans had come (mainly Abu Hor and Diwan). “Before relocation, the same research team made three survey trips of several weeks each to Nubia. The main purpose of these trips was to become acquainted at first hand with the districts from which the people of Kanuba migrated after the flooding of their lands in 1933–34. . . .” (1978:xvii–xviii). “Prior to

the selection of the research site, Kennedy, Samiha El Katsha (another SRC research assistant), and I went to Old Nubia in February 1963 for a two-week field trip to familiarize ourselves with its environment and current way of life" (Fahim 1979:256). At different times, team members visited al-Malki, Diwan, Ballana, Adindan, Dahmit, and Abu Hor.

The first research period in Kanuba ended in June 1963, and after the summer the team "returned to the village three months later, much clearer about our specific goals" (Kennedy 1977:3). Kennedy describes the research situation in considerable detail in his two books. Along with ongoing participant observations, certain questions were examined through survey techniques. By the end of the stay, there was extensive feedback between the team and the villagers. The more the team knew, the more they could find out.

Kennedy described the research arrangements as follows (1978:xix-xx):

Our group lived together in a house in the village. The research household consisted of my family and four research assistants, plus a cook. We ate our meals together and usually wrote up our notes in the evening, sometimes around the same table. This provided an atmosphere of maximum participation through discussion, exchange of information on events and village personalities, and collective planning of data-gathering strategies. The living arrangement of what seemed an optimum number of researchers allowed flexibility, feedback and reformulation of problems and tactics as fieldwork proceeded. It allowed a goal-directed camaraderie to develop that was invaluable. At all times we were aware of what was going on in the village, what had happened, what was planned, and what the attitudes of various individuals were towards these phenomena. I cannot recommend this mode of work highly enough.

Fahim (and others) added some details (1979:258-59; El Katsha/Mehanna interview). There were eight people living in a four-room house, arranged around a courtyard: Kennedy with his wife and two young children, and four research assistants, namely himself, El Katsha, Mehanna, and Abdel Hamid. There was no electricity or running water, and the toilet was a pit latrine. Water had to be boiled before use.

They agreed on a schedule that gave each researcher a two-week break every two months. Because Fahim was married, he was allowed a week a month to visit home. They could not all go together, but had to stagger their trips. They normally flew between Cairo and Aswan. Sometimes on

these trips they would meet other researchers in Aswan. The total time spent in the field was about thirteen months.

After some time, the village accepted them, but located them in a house near the village headman's house to facilitate observation and possible control. Villagers were somewhat puzzled both by the research method and by the sharing of a single dwelling. Fahim notes that while El Katsha and Mehanna were fluent in both Arabic and English (they were AUC graduates), he and Abdel Hamid were not. Thus they wrote their field notes in Arabic and these were translated by El Katsha into English for Kennedy. "The entire team used to spend an hour or two every evening reporting on the day's achievements and telling anecdotes; we also used to lay our plans for the following day's work. In the morning, we used to receive small white pocket cards full of further questions that Kennedy had thought of during the night" (Fahim 1979:258). Kennedy would sometimes ask them to probe further in certain areas, reflecting his greater theoretical sophistication and comparative knowledge as well as his interest in psychological anthropology. For instance, Kennedy was fascinated by the possession cult known as *zar*, and wanted to gain a full understanding of it (see Kennedy 1978:203–23). By the end of the project Kennedy was confident that the team members had evolved from "translators and interviewers into ethnographers" (Kennedy 1977:8).

Fahim notes that he had little formal background in anthropological research (more in sociology and social work/child welfare), which was why he had simultaneously registered in the anthropology master's program at AUC. Kennedy took time out from the research to tutor him in anthropology. There were some differences of viewpoint in the team, notably reflecting Fahim's 'inside' view and Kennedy's 'outside' view. At first Kennedy and Fahim would go everywhere together ("weddings, ceremonial events, market days"), but then later Fahim would work on his own and report back to Kennedy via the field notes. The methods used by Fahim and the others included participant observation and interviews, notably on household composition, occupational structure, and villagers' attitudes toward education and occupational careers for their children. Fahim's own work, eventually used in his master's thesis for AUC, was on change in religion as a result of resettlement (see Fahim 1973, 1978). El Katsha and Mehanna divided the village between them, with the Diwan people (Fadija) in the center for El Katsha and the two 'wings' from Abu Hor (Kenuz) for Mehanna; this also corresponded to the linguistic division. El Katsha also noted that the gender separation was so strong in the village that the men did not even realize that

they were carrying out a survey among the women (interview, see Kennedy 1978:xviii).

The best-described character in Kanuba is the man to whom Kennedy gives the pseudonym of Shatr Shalashil.<sup>47</sup> Shalashil's family was originally from Diwan, and he had lived much of his life in the cities of northern Egypt, returning to the south as a young adult. He is portrayed as the de facto village leader, leading indirectly, and with the general aim of promoting progress in the village.

Kennedy and Fahim set out on a project to record his life history. "Shatr told his story to Hussein Fahim in a series of interviews several evenings a week for more than three months" (Kennedy 1977:12). The interviews were conducted in Arabic, although Shalashil knew some English and probably sometimes responded directly to Kennedy. Before each interview Kennedy would suggest certain topics to Fahim, and afterward they would discuss and note what was said. "Though a student at the time with no previous experience in this kind of research, Hussein was very skillful in eliciting material in unobtrusive ways." Kennedy felt that Shalashil's narrative was "not an inflated fabrication" (1977:174) because the researchers knew too much about the context. "We are convinced of the essential truthfulness of his story" (1977:174). After the fieldwork period, Kennedy invited Shalashil to Cairo for a visit and more interviewing, after which Shalashil traveled to Alexandria with Fahim and his family. "We enjoyed each other and he shared with me so much of his personal life that he once said to me, 'I do not know how much is left that you do not know about me'" (Fahim 1979:267).

Kennedy noted in 1965 that his idea was to "relate the life history of an innovative leader in the village to the type, direction and rate of change which had taken place there."<sup>48</sup> The published version (1977:69–169), however, focuses on the innovative leader, but skimps on the analysis of how this relates to change in the village. The material is presented in a sociological framework derived from C. Wright Mills's focus on the relationship between an individual and a society (1977:12, 179).

There is also no discussion of how this text might have stemmed from the interview process. For instance, we are not told how much of the account was a response to probing and how much was volunteered (Kluckhohn 1945; Langness 1965). Given that Fahim was eliciting material along lines suggested by Kennedy, we have to assume that most of Shalashil's comments were responses to probing. One can presume that the notes were edited to produce a coherent sequence (that is, the published narrative does not reflect

the actual sequence of interviews). There is also some controversy over the fact that the material was presented as a single life narrative. Fahim argued, in a letter to Kennedy dated August 16, 1978, that he and Shalashil understood the material would not be used in this way, but instead abstracted in relationship to theoretical considerations in order to avoid embarrassment due to personal details. Fahim was particularly sensitive because his name was on the title page (“Kennedy with the assistance of Fahim”).

Publications from the Kanuba study were relatively numerous. Both Fahim’s and El Katsha’s master’s theses were published in revised versions. Fahim’s was published in the form of chapters on changes in religion (Fahim in Kennedy 1978, but see also his summary article, 1973), and El Katsha’s as a single piece on the impact of the relocation on marriage ceremonies (El Katsha 1978). Kennedy authored a book featuring Shalashil’s biography (Kennedy 1977) and wrote a number of articles on different aspects of religion and symbolism (originally for various anthropological journals but reprinted in Kennedy 1978).

Some of the material for these articles on *zar*, *mushabbra*, circumcision, and death rituals came from research in other Nubian villages; in fact it appears to be Kennedy who made the best use of the project’s data pool. He was in some ways more interested in the material referring to Old Nubia, whether gathered by researchers there during the project or by interviews with Kanubans on their memories of their home villages. Probably more than the others, he mastered the technique of instructing the assistants on the collection of data useful to him. He was explicit about acknowledging their contributions.<sup>49</sup>

Kennedy was keen to identify the social–psychological functions of the different ceremonies and beliefs he examined.<sup>50</sup> For instance he noted that the rituals for circumcision and excision provided for the expression of “communal solidarity and continuity, family prestige and continuity, sex separation, male dominance, and male superiority” as well as “fears related to fertility, sexuality, and gender identity” (1978:168). In tune with classic anthropology (van Gennep 1960 or Turner 1969), he noted that life-cycle rituals focused on “communal efforts to protect individuals believed to be rendered vulnerable by their life cycle status, and cooperative efforts to show support to the threatened individual and his family” (p. 242). His intention to show this required him to develop a functional understanding of the community itself, although this part of his argument was weaker. However, Kennedy felt he needed to distinguish between old and new elements in society, the new being less relevant for his concerns. Thus he tried to argue

back through various levels of Islamization to reach a pre-Islamic state, and sought data from the period before resettlement. [Implicitly he conceived of Nubian society as composed of layers reflecting the various outside influences, with 'pre-Islamic' at the bottom. Just as a psychoanalyst works through the various layers of personality, he wanted to delve down to the lowest layer in order to explain behaviors.]

Reviewing the field studies conducted under the direction of Fernea, Callender, and Kennedy, it is clear that the use of teams of assistants multiplied the amount of data collected. The assistants worked in different areas and on various topics. And it also enabled the team to overcome the language barrier to some degree. But it meant a gap between the understanding of the lead anthropologists and those collecting the data—and preparing it for use by translating, transcribing, coding, and so on. The drafting anthropologists did not always have “head notes” (Ottenberg 1990) to contextualize the field notes they were using. In the event, because the American anthropologists were often writing some time after the research, and even after leaving Egypt and direct contact with the field assistants, it was harder to compose ethnographically rich accounts: it was all a bit impersonal. In fact, later on back in Los Angeles, on May 10, 1971 Kennedy wrote to El-Hamamsy about how important it was to be back in human contact with the field data. He was “really plunging into the Nubian data again. Hussein’s visit served to rekindle both my energy and my guilt in that respect.”<sup>51</sup> Later that year he returned to Egypt and visited Kanuba for the one day Egyptian security would allow.

#### **Al-Dirr, Sayalla, Korosko: the Austrian Contribution**

Anna Hohenwart-Gerlachstein of the University of Vienna worked in the Fadija communities of al-Dirr and Diwan, Egypt, from August to December 1962, and also for a similar period in 1963. She writes that she was contacted by Alfred Métraux of UNESCO in 1960 (Hohenwart 1979:7) because she had worked with the ‘Ababda and Bisharin of the Eastern Desert in the late 1950s. Métraux encouraged her to undertake the salvage ethnography of the soon-to-be displaced Nubian populations (1988–89:77). She could not respond right away because of other obligations, but did eventually go. “I considered it my duty to fulfill this urgent task as soon as possible.” She had a strong sense of duty and *noblesse oblige*: “Beside the institutionalized working teams a few single ethnologists felt the obligation to join in the salvage work. I was one of those who worked by herself in close connection with the people” (Hohenwart 1975:185).

Hohenwart earned her PhD in 1951 with a thesis on the role of women in ancient Egypt. One of her mentors was Robert von Heine-Geldern, who actively promoted the idea that one of anthropology's urgent tasks was to document cultures before they disappeared. In this he shared a point of view with Tax of the University of Chicago and others, and helped spread the notion of an urgent anthropology, or salvage ethnography, through his involvement in the International Committee on Urgent Anthropological and Ethnological Research (ICUAER) of the International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences (IUAES) (see Heine-Geldern 1957). Hohenwart became associated with him in that work—doubtless the reason that Métraux approached her—and after Heine-Geldern died in 1968, she took over sole editorship of the ICUAER bulletin.

Hohenwart-Gerlachstein listed her support as coming from the Austrian Federal Education Ministry, the Austrian Academy of Sciences, the Austrian Research Council, the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, and the Cultural Office of the City of Vienna, and cited the years of research as 1962 and 1963 (Hohenwart 1965:39). The research was commissioned by the ICUAER. Some of this funding also covered research conducted by Mohamed Riad and Kawthar Abdel Rasoul, both cultural geographers and anthropologists who had earned their doctorates in Austria after early training at the Institute of Nile and Sudanese Studies at Fuad I University (later the Institute of African Studies at Cairo University). They were faculty members at Ain Shams University. They had previously studied the 'Ababda in the Eastern Desert, and now shifted to the valley, to an area where the 'Ababda were numerous.

The funding was supplemented, at least for the two Egyptians, by a small grant from Ain Shams University and some help from the Ford/SRC grant. The first field stay, in January–February 1962, was in Sayalla and al-'Allaqi, where Riad focused on the situation of the 'Ababda.<sup>52</sup> The following September, Riad, Abdel-Rasoul, and Hohenwart arranged to borrow one of the SRC's motorboats,<sup>53</sup> agreeing to cover the costs of the fuel and the boatman. The SRC was not using the boat during the summer months. Riad went with Nadim<sup>54</sup> to pick up the boat outside Aswan, but they had trouble operating it at first, and it drifted with the wind. Eventually, after much adventure, they landed in Dahmit, with which Nadim was familiar. Later, the boatman and Abdel-Rasoul joined them, and they started south. They had acquired sixty-eight tanks of fuel, which they sent upriver on the post boat to various stops, since it was more than they could load on the small boat. They had hoped to travel all the way to the Sudanese border, but because of the rising annual

flood had to turn around at Tushka. On the way back they stopped to visit with the German archaeologists and technicians who were moving the Kal-absha temple, and traveled with the boat that carried the last stone to the new site near the High Dam (this account follows Riad and Abdel Rasoul (1997); see photos in Riad and Abdel Rasoul 2007:100).

Finally, in January–February 1963, the couple went to the Arab district of al-Malki and the mixed district of Korosko, with some support from Ain Shams University (see Riad and Abdel Rasoul 2007:101). The focus of their research was human geography, oral tradition, genealogy, and history. Riad and Abdel Rasoul worked as a team, and while Riad discussed geography and history with the men, Abdel Rasoul would be with the women discussing folklore and tradition. In addition to notes, they produced tapes, photos, and a set of short color films.

Hohenwart had decided to concentrate her fieldwork in al-Dirr. “I was not only kindly received in Ed Derr but also asked by some teachers to return and help them in the collection of their heritage. They had clearly seen the full decay of their culture and wished to get some advice for the best way of ethnological documentation” (1988–89:78). Hohenwart recorded aspects of the culture using a camera, tape recorder, and notebook.<sup>55</sup> The recordings have been deposited in the Phonogramme Archive of the Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna. They include folktales, texts, and also music. Some of the folklore texts are included in her book (Hohenwart 1979). To complete the transcription and translation of these texts, Hohenwart invited Hussein Abdel Galil Ali, a schoolteacher from al-Dirr, to spend some time in Vienna (various periods between 1966 and 1968, Hohenwart 1979:10). Hohenwart also collected over one hundred items of Fadija material culture in the period before the relocation. These were exhibited at the Ethnographic Museum in Vienna,<sup>56</sup> where they are now held as part of the research collection (1988–89:80). The many photographs she took, mostly in the form of color slides, are still in her personal files. Copies of some slides were donated in 1988 to Aziz Abd el Wahab Soliman, another of her collaborators and also a schoolteacher, head of New Diwan’s IUAES-Regional Center on Urgent Research in New Nubia. On this last visit to New Nubia in 1988, Hohenwart also recorded some additional music, under a contract with UNESCO’s “Safeguarding Non-physical Heritage” initiative (1988–89:83).

### **Photography**

From the beginning of the project a photographer was recruited and attached to the project. This was Abdul Fattah Eid of the Ministry of Culture. Eid

had already been sent to Nubia by the Ministry in 1960 (see Ministry of Culture 1960). He seems to have made at least two trips to Nubia for the SRC project, one primarily to Ballana in early 1962 when the Fernea team was there, and another to the Kenuz area around Dahmit in early 1963 when the Callender team was there. He took both black and white and color photographs, and also made a film. Only a collection of about six hundred black and white photographs is still available. At the beginning the team planned to use his images for a photographic essay, combined with texts to be written by Fernea. In addition, Eid seems to have had an interest in crafts and prepared an exhibit for the 1964 Aswan conference. Eid was later director general of Art Museums at the Ministry of Culture (Serageldin 1982:80).

Over the course of the survey Fernea became acquainted with Georg Gerster, a Swiss photographer who had developed an interest in the Nubians and the Nile Valley in the 1950s. He had originally been attracted by the monuments, but then became fascinated by the people as well. He traveled up and down the Nile, sometimes with the Egypt-based Swiss artist Margo Veillon and others (Veillon 1994:140–41), and prepared two articles on Nubia for the *National Geographic* (see Gerster 1963, 1969). In late 1962 he made a trip through Sudanese Nubia with Fernea, Veillon, and others.<sup>57</sup> Out of these contacts came the idea of producing a book combining a text by Fernea with photographs by Gerster, thus substituting for the plan of using Eid's photographs. *Nubians in Egypt* does include some photographs by Eid<sup>58</sup>—the Ferneas provided a selection of Eid's photographs to Gerster, who selected some to add to his own.<sup>59</sup>

Gerster also recruited Horst Jaritz, then a young Swiss architect working on an archaeological expedition at Gebel Adda (1963–65), who contributed a brief section on traditional Nubian architecture.<sup>60</sup>

### **Parallel Research in Sudanese Nubia**

Although this account deals with Egyptian Nubia, it is useful to refer to some equivalent work done south of the border with at least an indirect connection to the SRC project. Andreas and Waltraud Kronenberg conducted research in Sudanese Nubia between 1961 and 1963, altogether spending about fourteen months in the field. From 1957 to 1964 they were attached to the Ministry of Education, Sudan, and later were on the staff of the Frobenius Institute of the Goethe University, Frankfurt-am-Main (Cunnison and James 1972:xiii). Although based in Germany, they were Austrian (Kronenberg 1979:175). During their time in the Sudan the pair were commissioned by the Sudanese Ministry of Education to carry out an ethnographic survey to

record the traditions and modern life of the Nubians in the endangered area (Kronenberg and Kronenberg 1978:264). The Kronenbergs had previously conducted research in the extreme south of the Sudan, on the Didinga and other semi-pastoral people, and were assigned to conduct research in Nubia. They were invited to the Aswan "Symposium on Contemporary Nubia" but were unable to attend as they could not spare time from the fieldwork.

After an exploratory review of Sudanese Nubia, the Kronenbergs decided to choose one representative village from each major Nubian group in the Sudan: Serra West for the Fadija and Kulb for Ard al-Hagar. Serra West is in the Faras (Wadi Halfa) salient, about thirty kilometers south of Ballana; Kulb is farther south. They were in the field from November 8, 1961 to May 12, 1962, from November 13, 1962 to March 20, 1963, and from January 5 to March 15, 1964. They collected a significant amount of information on residents, including some on the associations of men from these villages in Cairo and Alexandria. "Both the traditional ethnographic and the structural-functional approach were used in this study" (1963:303). The Kronenbergs' aim was to collect material "for an extensive report on the society and culture of the population of this area prior to resettlement, since a change of social structure and culture will probably take place in their new habitat" (1964:282). Later, in 1973-74, the Kronenbergs spent a further several months in Nubian villages such as Ashau and Maragha between the lake and Dongola adding to their collection of recorded folktales (Kronenberg and Kronenberg 1978:264). Their anthology includes some tales from the 1960s research but more from this later work. They also published on the shifting identities of the Sudanese Nubians, marriage, and other social structural issues.

### **Policy Applications**

In the spring of 1962, Fernea drafted two papers addressing the applied dimension of the project. In this he was doubtless responding to concern on the part of the Ford Foundation which wanted to see immediate practical results, as well as to his own desire to contribute. The papers were addressed to the Egyptian officials responsible for the relocation of the Nubians and were submitted to the Ministry of Social Affairs (see Fahim 1972). They were not published, and there is no indication of how they were circulated or how much impact they had. The fact that they remain solitary examples indicates that they did not find an audience. Fernea nevertheless expressed to the Ford Foundation that he felt they had usefully inflected policy.<sup>61</sup>

In the first paper, "The Use of Pilot Communities as an Approach to Nubian Resettlement" (Fernea 1962a:7), Fernea argues that representative small groups of Nubians should be resettled first, both to test out the system and because they could then help persuade and advise the remaining residents at the time of their move. Furthermore, administrators would learn what problems might arise in resettling the smaller advance group so that they could better prepare for the main population.<sup>62</sup> The second paper, "Cross-cultural Resettlement Administration: An Exploration of Some Potential Problems of Nubian Resettlement" (Fernea 1962b:12), lays out certain areas where cultural misunderstandings might arise between the resettled Nubians and the Egyptian administration. Fernea maintains that "In the case of Nubian resettlement . . . the human factor will very likely measure success or failure." He bases his comments on his observation of Nubian life during his fieldwork, arguing that Nubians should be involved as much as possible in planning the move and resettlement. Fernea points out that Nubian society is not hierarchical in the sense that one leader can make a decision for a group—instead everyone must be persuaded through discussion. Contact between Nubians and other Egyptians must reckon with cultural differences; what works elsewhere in Egypt may not work with Nubians. Furthermore, Nubians and Egyptians have stereotypes of each other (for example that Nubians are lazy and dislike farming; that Egyptians are inefficient), which derive from their historic relations, and they must exert an effort to overcome them. Fernea devotes several paragraphs to explaining the complex Nubian attitudes toward farming. He then stresses that Nubians prefer to be self-governing, that is, not taking all issues to a higher authority such as the police, and suggests that this trend should be encouraged.<sup>63</sup>

An interesting point of method is raised by one of Fernea's comments in this paper. He makes the point that "Nubian society is not hierarchically organized" and that no one is entitled to give orders to others (11). Thus administrators should give local leaders plenty of time to persuade their fellows of the wisdom of a course of action, and not attempt to "force action too quickly." This of course is sound advice in any small-scale community, in contrast to bureaucracies which function from the top down. However, this observation is not supported by any ethnographic detail either here or in *Nubians in Egypt*, although the latter does include a discussion of the Nubian preference for settling their own affairs.<sup>64</sup> It was, however, picked up by Fahim and included in slightly revised form in the paper by Salah el-Abd (1979:111–12), likewise with no

corroborating detail. According to this formulation, Nubia has no hierarchical structure, and so government orders are resented as incompatible with Nubian values. It would seem that this has become a stereotype, even if the actual orientation has shifted somewhat. The power relations between the Nubian communities and Egyptian society and government remain to some extent obscured by these formulations.

### **The State of Play at the Time of the Conference (January 1964)**

With some additional support from the Ford Foundation, the SRC organized the Symposium on Contemporary Nubia at Aswan's Dar al Thakafa in January 1964 (during Ramadan) under Fernea's chairmanship. The conference was well attended by Egyptian officials. General Mohamed Safwat, under-secretary of the Ministry of Social Affairs and chairman of the Joint Committee for Nubian Resettlement, was present and wrote a cordial thank-you note to El-Hamamsy. Dr. Hussein El Shafei, under secretary of the Ministry of Housing, and the governor of Aswan both offered remarks.<sup>65</sup> There were two representatives from Dar al-Salam village, and perhaps other Nubians in various official capacities. A number of senior Egyptian academics attended, together with AUC President Dr. Thomas Bartlett and several senior faculty members. There is no record that a representative of the Ford Foundation was present, but the US cultural attaché was. Discussion was in both Arabic and English.

In his report Fernea noted that "Invitations to present papers at the symposium were extended to all persons who were known to have done research on contemporary Nubian life over the past few years. . . . With the exception of one ethnographer who had worked in the Sudan and was unable to join us,<sup>66</sup> everyone to whom an invitation was extended prepared a paper for the meetings." The guest speaker was J. Clyde Mitchell, a notable British social anthropologist from the University College of Rhodesia and Nyasaland<sup>67</sup> who spoke about labor circulation and migration in light of southern African evidence. In this context the Nubians were seen as an interesting example of circulatory labor migration.

Many of the junior and senior researchers presented papers. Some twenty-three research papers were given in addition to official addresses, and there were thirty-seven persons listed as guests and observers, plus other members of the research team, bringing the total number of participants to about seventy-five. In addition to papers and discussions, the participants had a chance to visit the Aswan High Dam site and New Nubia, and view exhibits of photographs, paintings, and crafts. Fernea noted that

the papers “presented, and dramatized very effectively the results of research,” and this persuaded many participants of the value and meaning of “social research as an adjunct to the planning and execution of resettlement.” Fernea was especially proud of the performance of the junior researchers, noting that “From the beginning one of the objectives of the Nubian Project has been to train young Egyptian social scientists in the problems of field work and sociological analysis.”

Fernea expected that the American University in Cairo Press would produce an Arabic version, but nothing came of this (letter of Fernea to Hassan Fathi, February 6, 1964, Hassan Fathi archive, AUC). Hopes for an English-language publication through the Viking Fund Memorial Series also came to naught. Eventually, most of the papers were edited and published by Yale University’s HRAF (Fernea 1966).

Even though many key players in the Egyptian government attended, there is no mention in the published papers of the debate over the relationship of social research to resettlement. The papers by the senior researchers mostly address anthropological theory rather than policy or practical issues. Fernea and Callender developed a dialogue about a contrast in the social organization of the Fadija and the Kenuz, but there is nothing in the published versions that suggests the relevance of this for resettlement. (Fadija social organization is marked by bilateral kindreds, Kenuz by lineage segmentation, see also Fernea 1973.) The papers presented by Scudder and Geiser on different aspects of migration—and that by Kennedy on changes in occupational structure—provide useful background predicting the reaction of Nubians to their new homes, but again do not explore possible policy implications. El Zein’s contribution on the Adindan waterwheel is a detailed case study of a complicated situation, but one that was bound to disappear with the move. The bigger issue has to do with techniques of cooperation and integration. The papers on rituals and family life are more concerned with “compiling a record of the traditional Nubian culture” than with “providing information of value to planners of the resettlement scheme” (El-Hamamsy 1966:ii). These topics are not irrelevant to planners, but the connection is not made. The implication is that the relevance of the social conclusions is self-evident; in hindsight the link should have been made explicit.

The symposium essentially marked the end of the field research for the NES. Most of it had been completed by the summer of 1963, with the exception of the continuing study in Dar al-Salam, which was concluded in the spring of 1964, a few months after the conference.

## Winding Up

Beginning in 1963, the field teams were working in Cairo on translating and transcribing the field notes, coding and typing them, reproducing them in mimeographed form and then filing them in an appropriate order.<sup>68</sup> The material was indexed according to Murdock's *Outline of Cultural Materials*, which was the basis for the HRAF, and represented the state of the art for analysis in the pre-computer age. Eventually there were two series of documents (Hale 1971). The first comprised the journal-style field notes, written in the field day by day. These were collated and bound and were kept in the SRC library. Then there were the coded notes, where the journals were clipped, pasted on five-by-eight-inch file cards,<sup>69</sup> and filed under the relevant Murdock category. As of Hale's visit in 1971 this task remained incomplete. The filed cards from each field location were kept in separate drawers in the basement of the SRC. Where interview schedules had been used, they were also tabulated and the data prepared for write-up. There is very little evidence that this typed and indexed data was ever seriously used in write-up and analysis.

The team soon began to break up. Geiser returned to California in 1962, although he came back for another year later, and a final year around 1980.<sup>70</sup> By 1986 he was listed as an emeritus professor at California State University at Hayward. Callender left Cairo for the University of Delaware in 1963, shortly after returning from Dahmit, and a year earlier than scheduled. After two years at Delaware he transferred to Western Reserve University in Cleveland where he remained until he died in 1986. Scudder had come to Egypt for a single year, and he left on schedule in 1962 to resume research in Zambia.<sup>71</sup> All three of these scholars returned for the 1964 conference, but not for more research. More importantly, Fernea left for a year's sabbatical at the Middle East Studies Center at Harvard in 1965–66. While he was there he accepted an offer from the University of Texas where he remained until retirement.<sup>72</sup> And Kennedy, the last to arrive in 1962, left AUC in January 1966 to take up a post-doctoral fellowship at the SUNY-Buffalo. From there he moved back to the University of California at Los Angeles.<sup>73</sup> Furthermore, three of the key Egyptian associates left in 1965 and 1966 to pursue doctoral degrees in the US: Youssef and Fahim at the University of California at Berkeley, and el Zein at the University of Chicago. It would not be an understatement to say that the team was decimated. The breakup came before any serious drafting could be completed. Only some of the master's theses had been completed (Shukairy, Fahim, Zein, el-Messiry, El Katsha), in addition to a few articles.

Although in principle the project could progress with the team leaders scattered, leaving the clerks to organize the piles of data, the setup in fact did not work smoothly. There were translation problems and delays—inevitable, of course, because the senior researchers could not read the Arabic originals—and there may well have been other problems of improper coding, obscure translations, or sloppy work; apparently no one consulted the material enough to find that out. Both Fernea and Callender complained that notes that should have been sent to them in the US were delayed, and indeed the process by which they were sent sometimes sounds like a comedy of errors. When the material did reach the prospective authors, they were preoccupied with other tasks, and it was not easy to pick up their work on the Nubian data. Like Callender, some of the others probably took material with them that was intended to remain in Cairo: Callender took his field notes, maps, census data, versions of the interviews done in Alexandria and Cairo in spring 1962, and so on, all of which can now be found in the Smithsonian Institution's NAA. (The copies in Callender's files suggest that he may have retyped and edited the field notes, leaving the SRC version behind.) Scudder took the originals of interviews carried out in Old Nubia in 1962; in 2008 they were returned to the SRC. Fernea later took the remaining field notes with him to Texas to enter them onto a computer for easier analysis. The project was to type the material in—this was before scanning. The paper copy was discarded in an office move, and Fernea's own copy was lost in a computer glitch. Neither Fernea nor any of the several graduate assistants who worked on the project knew whether any other copies have survived. We have lost track of this set of notes.

El-Hamamsy was correct, then, when she noted in a letter to Callender (December 29, 1966, Callender file, NAA) that it would have been better if he had remained in Cairo while the translations and drafting were completed. "Perhaps our policy on this point has not been tough enough and that is why from now on no one is being allowed to leave without having left at least a first draft of their research." What applies to Callender could well have been applied to others. It is a good principle, if somewhat impractical. In any case it is too late.

An enormous amount of material was collected and prepared for final analysis; it was not an 'organic' process in which one person followed each step on the path, but instead reflected a complex division of labor. Those principally responsible for drafting did not always have full control of the database, especially after they left Cairo. To use these notes later meant utilizing them outside of their full context, which would have been in the imagination of the original note-taker (Ottenberg's "head-notes," 1990:144).

The drafting took place over an extended period, with ample opportunity for the authors to become distracted by other obligations. When the Ford Foundation conducted a “terminal evaluation” ten years after the cessation of fieldwork in 1974, the major works to emerge from this project were still in draft form, and needed another five years or so to come to fruition.

In the meantime other developments were taking place, not least the June 1967 War that left Egypt in a state of shock, and also in a very different security situation. There was now a new group of evacuees to handle, displaced from Sinai and the Suez Canal cities (Abdel Shakur, Mehanna, and Hopkins 2005), adding further stress on Egyptian society and the budget of the state. The SRC was also moving on at this time to questions of demography and population planning, and resources were diverted from the Nubian project and its successor activities.<sup>74</sup>

# 3 After the Move

As the Nubian Ethnological Survey (NES) came to an end, other processes continued: research follow-up with the now-resettled Nubians by team members and by others, the publication of results from the survey, the choice of projects for further study by the participants developing their careers, and, inevitably, the evaluation of the activity. Here we examine these activities.

## **The Early Resettlement Years**

The inhabitants of Old Nubia were relocated from their riverine villages and districts to the new settlements around Kom Ombo between fall 1963 and the first half of 1964. They were moved into village units,<sup>75</sup> although some of the villages were combined into larger agglomerations. Each Old Nubian district became a New Nubian village. Many have remarked on the sharp contrast between the open spaces of Old Nubia and the clustering of the new villages (see maps 3–8). Building the new houses was a monumental task only made possible by laying out the villages along rational lines with straight streets and centrally located institutions. In the rush to complete the resettlement process some issues were overlooked, particularly the soil and water conditions in the locations of the new villages, so that some constructions had to be resituated or otherwise corrected (Serageldin 1982).<sup>76</sup> The settlers were meant to have access to farmland, but that access was initially limited by the amount of land prepared for irrigated farming.

The SRC tracked the resettlement, especially of Dabud and Dahmit, the first two villages to move, in late 1963. Overseeing the fieldwork was

Fikri Abdul Wahab, who sent periodic reports back to Cairo and also prepared a paper identifying certain problems in the relocation process for the January 1964 symposium on the topic. During the first year or so others maintained contact with the resettled Nubians, not through extended fieldwork but through short-term visits.<sup>77</sup> For instance, John Kennedy reported, "After the resettlement of the Nubians had been completed in 1964, I also made several trips to New Nubia, near Kom Ombo. On one of these visits, including a survey of traditional medical practices, our group had the able extra assistance of Zeinab Gamal and Bahiga Haikal, both of the Social Research Center" (Kennedy 1978:xviii).

In 1966, Robert Fernea and Kennedy published a dense report on the initial adaptation to resettlement, covering the "social adaptations made by the Nubians during their first year of resettlement" (1966:349). It was based on contacts with people in New Nubia, although the report did not detail the methodology of data collection.<sup>78</sup> Fernea and Kennedy compared what the project team had determined to be Nubian practices and values in the early 1960s with what was emerging in the Kom Ombo resettled communities in that first year. They highlighted the changes in scale as scattered villages were combined into much larger agglomerations, bringing education and healthcare closer to people. They referred to the stress of the move on economic activities (agriculture and animal husbandry became impossible in the short run; there was more of a cash economy, with high prices). The disarray of the relocation period had nevertheless given way to a "new air of optimism" within a year, the authors argued, because material conditions had improved. In the new settlements, houses were organized by family size rather than kinship connections, and people were still trying to adjust to the new sense of space. Ceremonial life continued but had been simplified, in part because shorter distances meant that many more people could attend. Some Kenuz villages agreed to celebrate only one *mulid* (festival) per village rather than many. At the same time, several Egyptian customs and practices were adopted, notably in marriage ceremonies, for example the wearing of white bridal gowns. By breaking down the reaction into several components, the authors facilitated a nuanced appreciation of the overall response, with a focus on social process rather than static comparison.

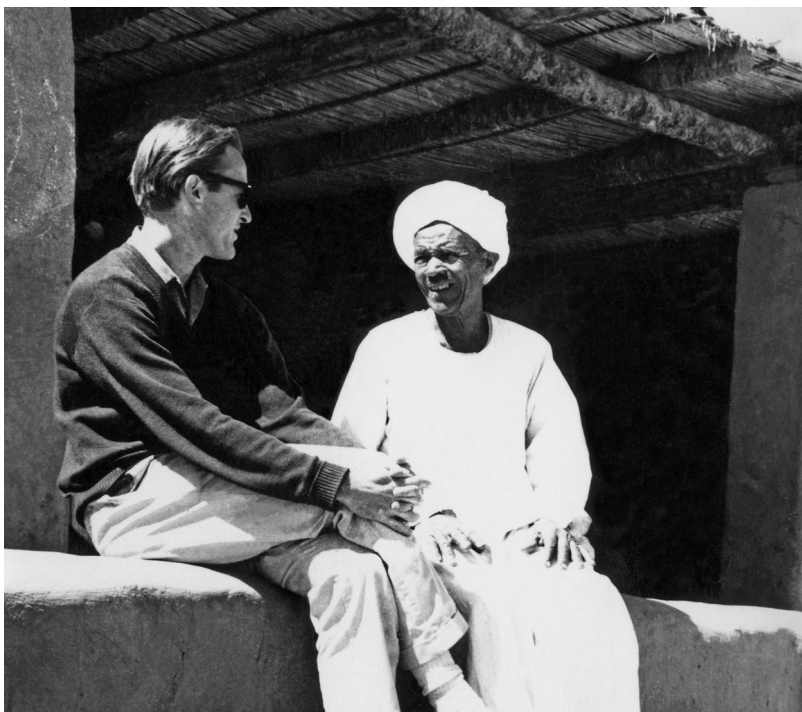
Linking this work to their previous research, the authors asserted that, "Most of the adjustments to the new conditions of life which have emerged after only one year of resettlement are meaningfully related to well-established Nubian cultural and social patterns" (353). But many more changes



1. Hekmet Abu Zeid, Minister of Social Affairs, and Laila El-Hamamsy, Director of the Social Research Center, signing an agreement to cooperate, observed by Robert Fernea, director of the Nubian Ethnological Survey, and an aide from the ministry.



2. Nubian Project meeting in the Social Research Center: John Kennedy, Laila El-Hamamsy, Robert Fernea, and Nadia Youssef.



3. Robert Fernea and a Nubian interlocutor conversing in front of the field headquarters in Ismailiya village of Ballana district.



4. Research assistant Abdul Hamid el Zein and Nubian men, Ballana.



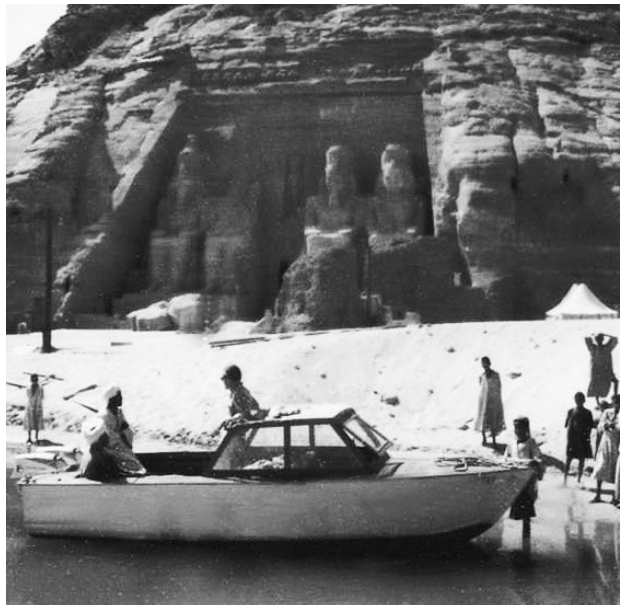
5. A gathering of women in Ismailiya, including Beryl Slocum and Bahiga Haikal (left), and Elizabeth Fernea with her son (center).



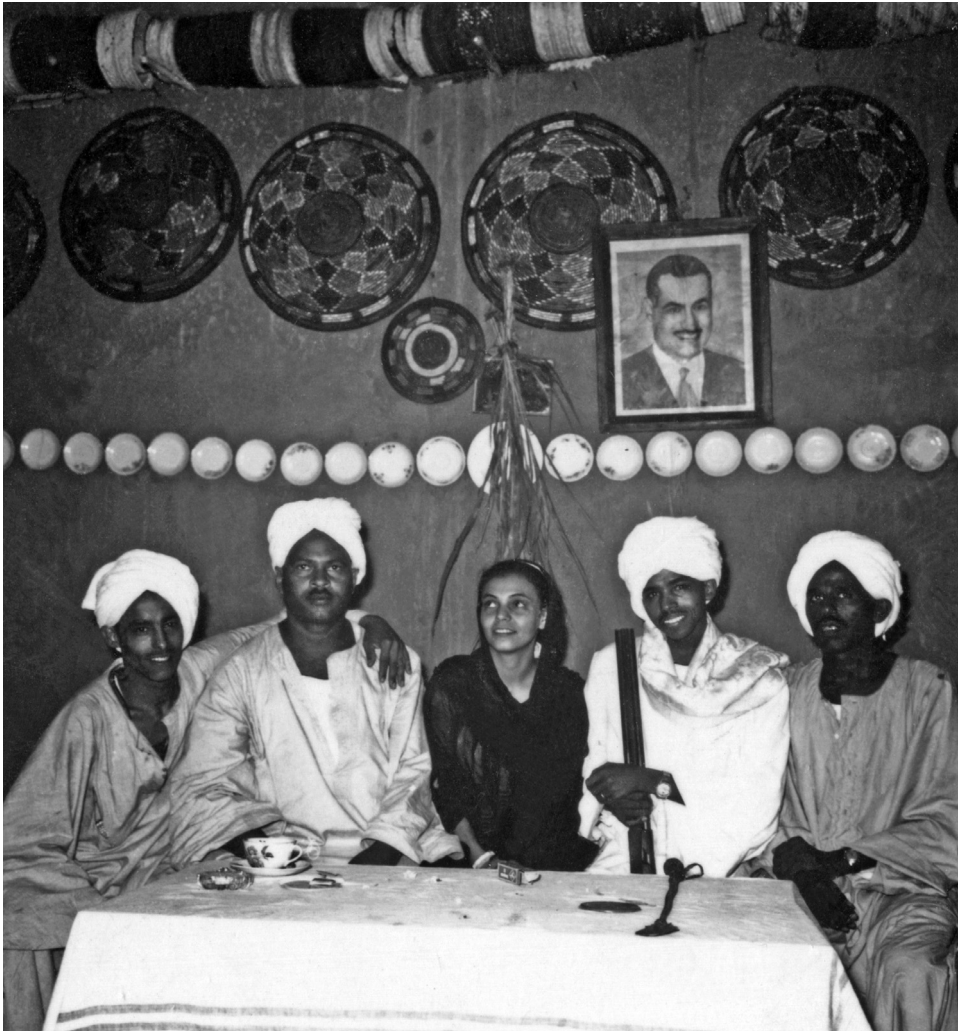
6. Afaf el Deeb and friends sharing tea in Ismailiya.



7. Research assistant Karim Durzi talking with farmers, Ismailiya, Ballana.



8. Fernea and project motorboat in front of Abu Simbel Temple in its original location.



9. Afaf el Deeb with a marriage party, Benha, Ballana. The bridegroom, second from right, came from Cairo for the wedding.



10. Abdul Hamid el Zein observing a marriage exchange, Benha, Ballana. The groom has brought the bride price of clothing, contained in the suitcase.



11. A musical evening in Ballana. Behind the piper are Peter Geiser and Thayer Scudder.

12. Fahima Abdallah,  
Fadwa el Guindi, and  
friend, Dahmit.



13. Fathey Bahr  
explaining social data  
to Nawal el-Messiri,  
Dahmit.

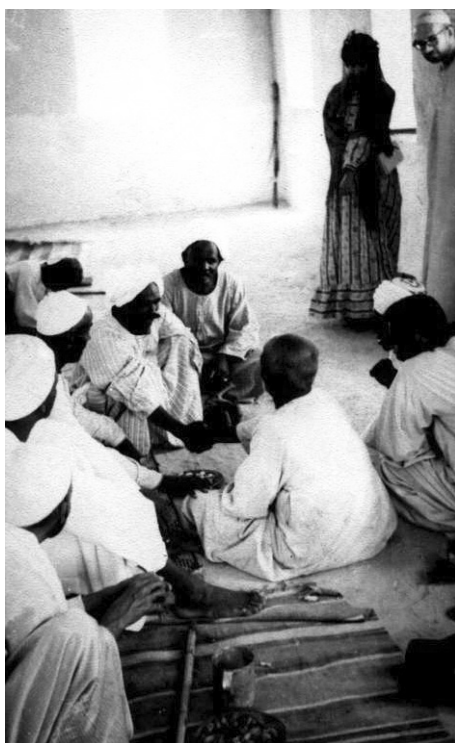


14. Fikri Abdel Wahab  
interviewing, Dahmit.





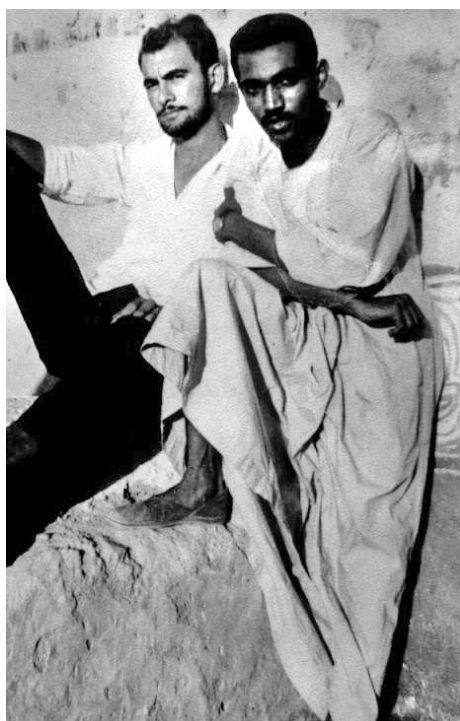
15. Group of men including Abdul Fattah Eid (left) and Fikri Abdel Wahab (third from left), Dahmit.



16. Bride and groom sponsors sealing marriage agreement as ethnographer team—Charles Callender, Fadwa el Guindi, and Fikri Abdel Wahab—observe, Dahmit.



17. Dar al-Salam team in front of research headquarters: Samiha El Katsha, Hussein Fahim, Omar Abdel Hamid, John Kennedy and his two children, Sohair Mehanna.



18. Omar Abdel Hamid and Fikri Abdel Wahab.



19. Samiha El Katsha walking to her interview, Dar al-Salam.



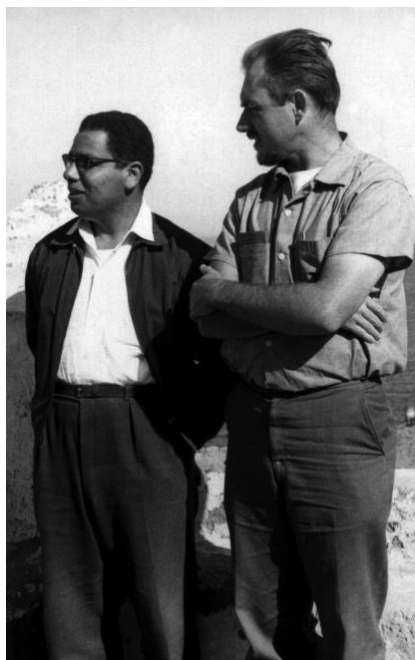
20. Sohair Mehanna with children from Dar al-Salam.



21. Fetching water from a pump, Dar al-Salam.



22. Samiha El Katsha with informants.



23. Hussein Fahim and John Kennedy.



24. Project motorboat near 'Aniba. Anna Hohenwart standing in the boat, Mohamed Riad on the gangplank.



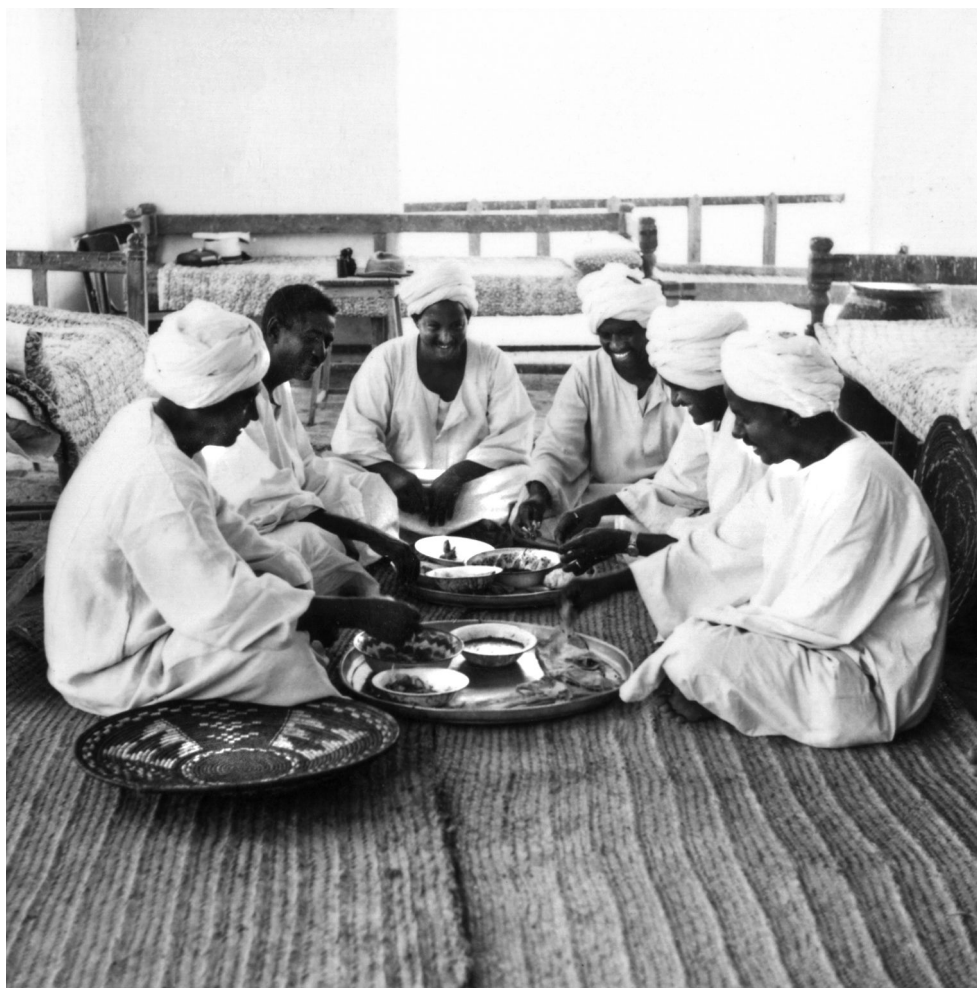
25. Kawthar Abdel Rasoul, Anna Hohenwart, Asaad Nadim.



26. Mohamed Riad in Gersha, interviewing in a well-painted guestroom.



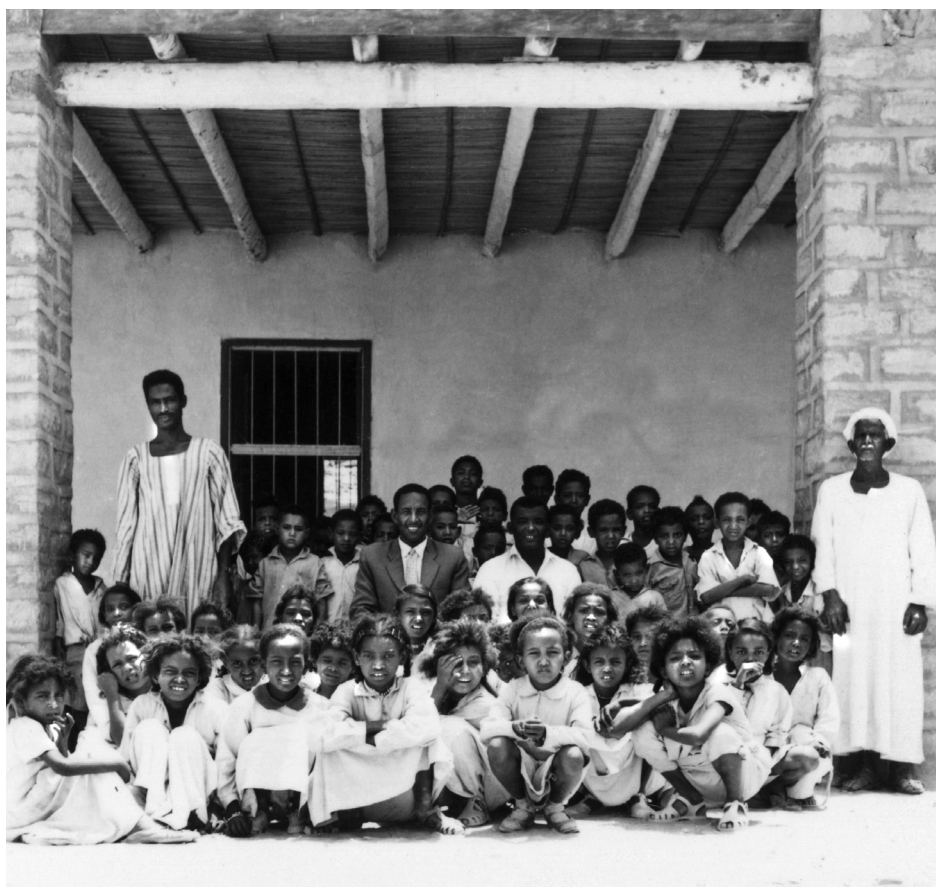
27. A group of dancers with Kawthar Abdel Rasoul (marked by X) in Nubian dress performing the ceremonial wedding dance, Fadija zone.



28. Al-Malki, Arab area, *mulid* meal for men.



29. Assistants' table at banquet, Aswan, January 1964. Clockwise from bottom left: Hussein Fahim, Sohair Mehanna, unidentified, Fikri Abdel Wahab, Abdul Hamid el Zein, Alan Horton, Nawal el-Messiri, Cynthia Nelson, Linda Sayegh, Wafiya Mishriki, and Bahiga Haikal.



30. School pupils, al-Malki.

were doubtless in store. These included shifts with regard to migration and employment in addition to the “survival of the Nubians as an ethnic entity in the context of Egyptian modernization and nationalism” (354). With some prescience, Fernea and Kennedy noted that the government’s recognition of the Nubians as a single group with rights helps sustain the identity, if they can also retain the basic values and norms of Nubian culture. One of these is a certain pragmatic approach to problem-solving. In the meantime, as one Nubian is quoted as saying, “We want to modernize our houses but not our values.”<sup>79</sup>

Fernea attempted to take up fieldwork once more in Nubia but ran into access problems. The Ferneas visited New Ballana briefly on several occasions, including in 1981 (Fernea and Fernea 1997:262–85, see also Fernea and Rouchdy 1991:201). In 1991 Fernea planned to survey all the Nubian resettled areas around Kom Ombo but was unable to get a research permit. Eventually he was allowed to visit his friends in New Ballana, but not to go further. Coming from Aswan, Ballana is at the ‘entrance’ to New Nubia (Fernea 1994:156), so he was unable to visit other communities in the Nubian crescent.

### **Fahim Picks up the Thread**

The idea of conducting a longitudinal follow-up study had of course been present from the beginning, and by necessity a certain amount of time had to pass. The task of leading this more comprehensive study fell to Hussein Fahim, who had in the meantime earned a master’s degree from AUC and a PhD in anthropology from the University of California at Berkeley. One of Fahim’s main goals was to bring social science to bear on Egyptian development, rather than to seek to situate the Nubian experience in a contemporary theoretical context.

Fahim maintained an interest in Kanuba as he was writing his master’s thesis at AUC on changes in religion there (Fahim 1966, sections were published as articles, see Fahim 1973, 1978, Kennedy and Fahim 1974). Also in the period 1964–66 Fahim followed the relocation process in New Nubia while preparing for his PhD work in the US, including a two-week visit in the summer of 1966. From 1966 to 1968 Fahim was in California preparing his PhD on an overview of Nubian resettlement as a case study of developmental change (1968), after which he returned to Egypt. Early in 1969 he made a month-long exploratory follow-up visit, and then went to the Sudanese resettlement site at Khashm al-Girba to begin establishing a comparative framework.

In 1970, the Social Research Center (SRC) appointed Fahim the principal investigator of a five-year research project to “study and evaluate the agricultural scheme in New Nubia, especially as it related to the villagers’ social structure and culture” under the auspices of the Egyptian Organization for Land Cultivation and Development and with funding from the US Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.<sup>80</sup> The project also examined the settler–administrator relationship, social integration, and community development (Fahim 1973:483–84). In June 1970, Fahim, Omar Abdel Hamid, and Abdul Wahab spent three weeks in Kom Ombo convincing officials and villagers to get the project started. In the fall Fahim designed a survey schedule for the New Nubia villages, and in January 1971 he surveyed forty-three New Nubia villages and Kanuba, with the help of a team from the SRC (Fahim 1973). Constraints on research permissions kept Fahim from the field for two years, followed by a year of absence from Egypt, which he spent working with Scudder at Caltech. The next visit to New Nubia was in 1974 when he “administered an interview schedule to a sample of 150 land holders in two of the New Nubian villages” and also made a quick visit to Kanuba (Fahim 1979:258–59). But efforts to continue the survey were sabotaged because the Nubians provided false information and were antagonistic, claiming there were too many researchers; moreover, the security conditions were stringent. It had become a poor research environment. As such the research project came to an end in late 1974 (see Fahim 1973, 1975). After 1975 Fahim made no more attempts at fieldwork among the Nubians, though he did continue to reflect on his experiences (Fahim 1983:173–78).

Fahim’s discussions during this period shows his anguish at the dilemma he experienced—whether to stress the academic and theoretical side of the research or to emphasize the applied and practical part. Clearly his inclination rested with the latter, and that is in fact what he did. He was inclined to fit the research within an understanding of Egypt’s development. Some of his papers, published and unpublished, from this period address practical problems that the government was in a position to solve. Indeed, his recommendations are directed at the authorities. At the same time he became more appreciative of the difficulties the government faced. This sympathy was likely sharpened by the experience of the 1973 War, which found him in the US. His feelings became somewhat more balanced, he says, between the interests of the Nubians and the goals of the government. He became “more empathic with both the administration’s and the Nubians’ problems” (1983:177), but insisted more than ever that the results of university research on social problems be made available to the interested parties—in

this case the Nubians—and noted that the NES publications had been slow in coming, and then mostly in English. He thus made an effort to publish some material in Arabic, and tried communicating directly with the Nubian community in Cairo through lectures given in Cairo's Nubian clubs. Fahim also explored the notion of an “indigenous” anthropology, where the anthropologist would be a native of the country of fieldwork (Fahim 1977).

Fahim's final major contribution to the study of Nubian resettlement was an overview of the entire process from dam construction to the adaptation to New Nubia (1983). Many of the themes in his book can be traced back to the writings of the NES, with particular influence from Thayer Scudder's four stages of adaptation (best seen, however, in Scudder 1985). In this work he deals with the relations between the Nubian population and the Egyptian government, summarizing the initially difficult conditions the Nubians found after the move and the coping mechanisms they brought to bear. Fahim also addresses the issue of a return to the shores of the lake as well as the question of continued labor migration to further shores outside Egypt. Overall he judges the resettlement experience to have been flawed largely because of failure to involve the Nubians in planning, but nonetheless not without benefits for the residents, especially in the areas of health and education.

In 1976, Fahim was recruited to join a team funded by the US Environmental Protection Agency and the Ford Foundation to assess the Aswan High Dam and its effects. He was joined in the Water Studies on the River Nile and Lake Nasser initiative by three Egyptian anthropologists: Sherif el Hakim, Shahira Fawzy, and Nirvana Khadr,<sup>81</sup> who carried out field studies around the lake (Fahim 1981:xiv).

The SRC also attempted to follow up on the NES and subsequent work by organizing a conference in 1971 entitled “Human Settlements on New Lands,” building on the SRC's work “in the study of rural resettlement, particularly the relocation of the Nubian population as a result of the building of the Aswan High Dam, and the voluntary resettlement of rural families in Egypt's land reclamation areas” (El-Hamamsy 1979:vi). There was in fact little direct discussion of these cases; the focus was on a more general or even theoretical level. The goal was to facilitate communication between researchers and planners.

## **Publications**

More than a hundred publications have emerged from the NES and its affiliates (see bibliography). The number is necessarily vague because of different levels of publication and repetition of certain texts. Some short articles were

printed relatively quickly, though it took the book-length studies and collections longer to appear. Many of the papers from the 1964 Aswan conference came out in a somewhat informal publication edited by Fernea (1966). Elizabeth Fernea published her non-fiction account of life in Egypt, *A View of the Nile*, with its lengthy section on Nubia, in 1970.<sup>82</sup> Charles Callender with the assistance of Fadwa el Guindi produced the monograph *Life Crisis Rituals among the Kenuz* in 1971, put out by Case Western Reserve University Press. But the first comprehensive book to appear was *Nubians in Egypt: Peaceful People* under the authorship of Fernea and Georg Gerster (1973).<sup>83</sup> Fernea's text is based on the research conducted in Old Nubia—by himself and his associates in Ballana and Adindan in the Fadija area, and by Callender and his associates in Dahmit in the Kenuz zone. The book takes Nubian identity as its theme and begins by asking who the Nubians are and concludes by surmising that the group will survive despite changes. Fernea presents the Nubians as a “peaceful” people, able to settle their disputes through negotiation. Their relationship to land and water is complex, he outlines, and requires cooperation among kin and neighbors. They maintain their association with each other outside Nubia through the urban clubs based on village of origin. Their institutions and practices have served them well and are likely to continue to do so.

Ferneas argument that the Nubians were a remarkably peaceful people struck a chord with a school of thought in anthropology attempting to demonstrate that aggression is not a human universal. Douglas Fry and others have constructed a database of some twenty-five ‘peaceful’ societies, and the Nubians are included on the basis of Ferneas report (Kemp and Fry 2004). Ferneas argument in turn suggests that Nubians are effective examples because of the pervasiveness of shared resources, crosscutting kin ties, and a well-established pattern of mediation when quarrels threaten. Disputes are thus contained before they get out of hand, and physical aggression is rare. None of this is unique to Nubians, but perhaps that is the point: this too is human. Fernea further stresses that the Nubians think of themselves as peaceful, and speak of their country as a land of peace and security. He remarks that this presentation of self pushed him to explain the sources of peacefulness (Ferneas 2004:120).

Shortly after *Nubians in Egypt*, Kennedy produced two books. The first, *Struggle for Change in a Nubian Community* (1977) provides an overview of Nubian ethnography and a description of Kanuba. The second half of the work includes a lengthy text recounting the life and philosophy of a local leader, presented as an autobiography. The next year he published *Nubian Ceremonial*

*Life* (1978) including reprints of some of his earlier articles and also more carefully edited versions of articles by Fahim, Samiha El Katsha, Fadwa el Guindi, and Nawal el-Messiri. The focus is not so much on religion as on ceremonies—marriage, death, religious rituals, and so on—and he argues that Nubian religion is an “amalgam,” consisting of parts derived from a variety of sources (1978:5). Kennedy explored the intersection of religious belief and practice on the one hand and the individual’s psychological needs on the other, and posited that the different kinds of belief reflected the historical development of Nubian society from pre-Islamic to contemporary Muslim.

Later on came Fahim’s two books. The first dealt with the story of the Aswan High Dam and its implications (Fahim 1981); naturally the resettlement of the Nubians is investigated, along with other issues such as lake fishing, shore erosion, and the like. The second (Fahim 1983) is discussed above. Last to come out in print was Geiser’s completed work on his survey of the Nubians living in Cairo, showing their degree of integration into the urban occupational structure. Geiser also stressed that even in the 1960s the demographic pattern of migration was shifting from the individual male to families.

### **The Junior Researchers Pursue Further Study**

When the Ford Foundation approved some additional funding for the SRC to complete the project, some were earmarked for graduate fellowships in the US. Three of the assistants from the project were chosen. Nadia Youssef went to Berkeley in 1965 to study sociology, Fahim also enrolled at Berkeley in 1966 to study anthropology, and Abdul Hamid el Zein went to Chicago in 1966 to study anthropology. Fahim relied on the data he had brought with him from Egypt on Nubian resettlement, and earned his PhD by 1968, returning to Egypt. Later, Fahim seemed disappointed that he had not sought out a cross-cultural experience for his PhD work, noting that working at home, as in his case, deprived him “of the challenging experience of exploring other cultures and developing the sense of comparison and critical outlook” (Fahim 1977:85). He felt that by working with Nubians he was working with fellow Egyptians rather than in a cross-cultural situation. Youssef wrote a statistical thesis comparing women and work in the Middle East and Latin America, then remained in the US, working on international as well as US issues.<sup>84</sup> Zein chose to explore a new field site, and did research for his degree in Kenya. His thesis was a structural analysis of Islam in the Swahili town of Lamu (see El Zein 1974). After his degree, El Zein returned briefly to AUC, then undertook a research project in Oman, and finally returned to the US. El Zein took up a post at Temple University, Philadelphia, where he died in

1979 at the distressingly early age of forty-five (Eickelman 1981). All three were in the US when the June War of 1967 with Israel ended catastrophically for Egypt.

Other participants went to the US for their PhDs under the auspices of the Ford Foundation—el Guindi, el-Messiri, Asaad Nadim, and Sohair Mehanna. El Guindi went first to Michigan State University, but then after two years transferred to the University of Texas where she was able to work with Fernea; she eventually wrote her thesis on the Zapotec Indians of Mexico (see el Guindi 1986). Like Zein, she situated her work within the current debate on structuralism in American anthropology. El-Messiri and Nadim went to Indiana University where el-Messiri wrote a thesis on the anthropological analysis of an inner-city neighborhood in Cairo (N. Nadim 1979) while Nadim focused on *mashrabiya* carpentry as an example of folklore (A. Nadim 1975). Both then returned to the SRC, as did Mehanna who earned a master's degree in political science from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University in Boston.

El Guindi's book includes an elaborate tribute to her Nubian apprenticeship in anthropological fieldwork. She notes, "During the course of living with the Mettokki-speaking Kenuz Nubians of Dahmit, I was completely immersed in their life for a period of one year, and my outlook on humanity began to change" (1986:xiii). She goes on to outline the different areas of association—joy, mourning, conflicts, the uncertainties of the women whose menfolk were all away in the cities. El Guindi then makes a point of thanking Robert Fernea and especially Laila el-Hamamsy for supporting her through this initiation. Although less effusive, El Zein also remembers the SRC apprenticeship positively in his acknowledgments for the Lamu book (1974:xxii).

The NES was the first fieldwork experience for some of the Egyptians, perhaps the second for others, but in either case it became part of the training and background for a career in anthropology that went beyond the confines of Nubia, and even of Egypt. The project was the nursery for a generation of Egyptian anthropologists.

### **The Role of the Ford Foundation**

In order to appreciate the role of the Ford Foundation, it is necessary to backtrack. We refer here to documents retained in the Foundation's files. We have two sets of documents, one discussing the rationale for funding the survey in the first place, and a second set evaluating the results ten years or so after the completion of the project.

## Planning

The Ford Foundation, through its office in Cairo, was the main supporter of the NES. This section provides some information on the debate among Ford Foundation officials in Cairo and New York on the appropriateness and utility of the project. The discussion takes us back to the beginning of the project, and also to its conclusion with the final Ford evaluation. Contrasting this with the comments of the anthropologists indicates the gap that existed between the thinking at these different levels.

On November 24, 1960, John Hilliard, the resident representative of the Ford Foundation in Cairo, wrote to F.C. "Champ" Ward, program director for the Near East and North Africa at the Ford Foundation office in New York, providing supportive background on the project proposed by the SRC. He noted that the "real and present merit of the project . . . resides in its relationship . . . to the vast human and technological problem of reclaiming and settling 1.5 million acres of land [in other words, not just Nubian resettlement, but the effort to settle the desert]. . . . Hamamsy and Fernea are coming to see the project in this light." Hilliard then went on to recount an exchange he had with Sayed Marei, the Central Minister of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform. Marei was supportive of the project, feeling that the 'human element' in development had been overlooked. Hillard noted that Marei "sees the project as a pilot effort to test and demonstrate the application of social science techniques to the problem of social and economic change on a larger scale." This made the project extremely important for the Ford Foundation to support, according to Hilliard.<sup>85</sup>

This letter was probably written in the context of negotiations about how to phrase the request for support from the SRC. The proposal, when it came, stressed the application of social science to development problems: "A study of the Nubian people is vitally needed before the inevitable changes which will follow relocation, for it is only by basing resettlement plans on a reliable source of information about their present way of life that mistakes, costly in human misery and national income, can be avoided. . . . This survey offers the hope of providing those responsible for the resettlement of the Nubian people with otherwise unavailable information from which to plan new communities, as well as producing a cadre of young Egyptians experienced in the methodology of the social sciences and familiar with traditional Nubian culture through first-hand experience."<sup>86</sup>

Two months later, in a letter recommending approval of \$100,000 for two years for the "Nubian Resettlement Survey," Hilliard reiterated many of his original points with regard to Marei's support.<sup>87</sup> He emphasized that

the survey “will provide a setting in which to train qualified Egyptian students from local institutions in the research methods of the social sciences and give senior scholars an opportunity to do research under a coordinated program.” Finally, he concluded that the project could “serve as an example of the type of operation necessary if the human element in Egypt’s development projects is to be as systematically accounted for as the technological and economic considerations.”

The Ford Foundation saw the project less as one of salvage anthropology—the need to preserve or at least record Nubian culture before the loss of their homeland led to its disappearance—and more as one devoted to enhancing the Egyptian development effort through the application of social science. Knowledge was important for planning. We noted earlier that what the SRC was calling an “Ethnological Survey of Nubia” the Ford Foundation relabeled the “Nubian Resettlement Survey.” From the beginning, Foundation officers took pains to ensure that there was substantial Egyptian participation. We can infer from the correspondence that Hilliard was keener on the project than the New York-based officers he had to convince. Perhaps that is inherent in relations between the field and the headquarters in an organization like the Ford Foundation.

### **Evaluation**

In 1974 the Ford Foundation undertook a “terminal review and evaluation” of the two projects—the Nubian resettlement survey (\$100,000) and the dissemination of information and training of anthropologists (\$65,000).<sup>88</sup> This was understood to be ten years after completion, and the evaluation was an internal one as the main author, Harvey Hall, had been a program associate in the Ford Foundation New York office at the time of the project. After reviewing the background as given above, Hall alluded to the reservations on the part of the Foundation because the focus of the project appeared to be on scholarly research rather than policy. Hall then went on to summarize Fernea’s approach in terms of a “broad net anchored at crucial points” (p. 6, as mentioned, this is a phrase I cannot find in Fernea’s documents that have come to us), that is, combining surveys with community studies. However, the issue of producing data that could help shape resettlement policy remained. Hall points out that Fernea himself tried to overcome this with two papers produced in spring 1962 and through continuing discussions with officials from the Ministry of Social Affairs and elsewhere. However, it seems Fernea felt that although these papers and comments were read, he was “uncertain as to what effect these contacts were having on the authorities,”

not least because of the origin in foreign, and even American, researchers. The only evidence for impact was in the form of policy changes that seemed to point in the same direction as the papers, that is, to make sure that Nubians were better represented, focus the administration more on Nubian issues, encourage some families to move early, and change the definition of 'family' to suit the Nubian case better (pp. 8–9). The same points had been made at the "Symposium on Contemporary Nubia" in January 1964, which facilitated communication between researchers and government officials. "Fernea thought that by this means they had 'converted' a number of important officials to a belief in the importance of social research as an adjunct to the planning and execution of resettlement" (p. 13).

The two shortcomings of the project were felt to be the relative lack of emphasis or success in policy-oriented research, despite some effort, and the inadequate level of correlation between the various parts of the research project itself. Even if the project had little impact on the resettlement of the Nubians, it did lay the basis for a continuing evaluative study of community integration since resettlement, of the type that Fahim had been conducting. "Any criticism of the initial research should thus be tempered by an appreciation of this longer-range involvement" (18). The evaluation concludes that, all things considered, the foundation's money was well spent.

The internal reaction to Hall's report at the Ford Foundation stressed, for the most part, their regret that the policy dimension was so poorly developed, although there was a feeling that the foundation would "do it again" because it was "worth doing." Terry Prothro, a social psychologist from the American University in Beirut, argued that the team should have been more multi-disciplinary and could have used a political anthropologist. The project was deemed a "limited success."

## **In Conclusion**

It could be that a decade from the completion of the project was too short an evaluation period. Perhaps with the benefit of another thirty-five years of hindsight we might offer a more complex picture. The project could be judged on the basis of its scholarly results, either content or theory, its promotion of the careers of individual social scientists, or its contribution to development in Egypt, the facilitation of Nubian resettlement in particular.

As mentioned, the publications exceed one hundred. The book-length publications were slow to appear, mostly ten to fifteen years after the field-work, and much of the collected data was not published. Unfortunately, neither the delay nor the amount of unpublished field material is uncommon

in anthropology. Nevertheless publications continue to come out; the most recent in our bibliography appeared in 2007, and there is at least one in press. The more recent ones are still largely based on research from the early 1960s, which underscores both the richness of the original data and the lack of updating.

But does all this amount to a coherent account of Nubian society and culture? The publications do not include a comprehensive analysis of traditional Nubia—the nearest to that is Fernea's semi-popular essay included in *Nubians in Egypt*. Many topics remain unstudied. The question of how to account for the differences, where they exist, between Kenuz and Fadija, for example, is not systematically addressed, though there are some hints. By extension, how culturally distinct Nubians of any type are from their Arab neighbors is also not broached.<sup>89</sup> At least some features which team members treated as characteristically Nubian (for example, *mushabara*; the saint cult; lineage concerns) were/are in fact found in Upper Egypt if not elsewhere, and the Adindan irrigation system resembles those in northern Sudan. Terms like 'Nubian,' 'Kenuz,' and 'Fadija,' are not sufficiently problematized. In several places we read that the Fadija in particular had a form of stratification, with slaves or ex-slaves at the bottom and a small ruling caste of *kashef* at the top, but these status differences are not thoroughly described or analyzed and are clearly avoided in some texts. The different Nubian communities are treated as equivalent even though we are told that some of them had particular histories—the settlements were the headquarters of one form of administration or another, the site of a hospital, a school or a pump scheme, or had a special role like Korosko as a communications link and transshipment point. Scudder and Geiser's publications, in fact, stress the variation between communities in the Nile Valley.

The team was only just beginning to handle gender substantively at the end of the fieldwork period. Kennedy had drafted an article on the "dual social worlds" in Kanuba, based on the different perspectives of men and women, but in the end the material appeared only as a section in his book (1977:62–68). Callender drafted a note on gender for a newsletter devoted to the anthropology of the Middle East, and the monograph on life crisis rituals contains considerable material on the place and role of women. Elizabeth Fernea highlighted the dilemmas of women in her writing on Bal-lana. Several AUC master's theses dealt with gender—Shukairy (1963), el Sawi (1965), and El Katsha (1969). The surviving field notes from the survey contain a good deal of material on gender, and further analysis would be worthwhile.

Neither do we have an adequate analysis of the social process that the resettled Nubians went through—though an issue here is what time frame to use, whether ten years or a century after the relocation. If we think of Scudder's scheme in four stages, then the process is still under way half a century later. We have a sense in the short run that there was more of this and less of that, but we do not have an understanding of the process by which Nubians may change and yet remain themselves. Perhaps that requires us to step back even more.

Although it may be true, as Fernea pointed out in 1962 (Fernea 1962), that authoritarian or hierarchical leadership was rare among the Nubians, there were nonetheless leaders. The broad question of political leadership and process is avoided here, whether within the Nubian communities or in relationship to the national society. The rich case material on Shalashil in Dar al-Salam is an excellent case study of political leadership at the local level, but it did not lead to an analytical breakthrough. We know that Nubian candidates are elected to the Egyptian People's Assembly from various constituencies, but we have no insight into the process and the meaning of this.

One topic that is reasonably well documented is the maintenance of a Nubian identity—or perhaps rather the creation of a collective identity and then its maintenance. This point was of enduring interest to Fernea, and he analyzed and commented on it in various contexts. In fact, one of the more obvious points to make about contemporary Nubians is that despite all the changes, not only the resettlement but the increasing urbanization and sophistication of the population, a Nubian identity is still very much intact. They are one among many examples of the perseverance of ethno-linguistic minorities in the modern world. The work of Frédérique Fogel (1997) poses the question of Nubian identity as the central issue in Nubian studies, and argues that their identity is in fact based on their resettlement as the latest example of movement.

The NES team never questioned its underlying directness of observation. They were ethnographers, describing what they saw and heard. There was, they thought, a Nubian culture (or several Nubian cultures) which could be delineated, documented through salvage ethnography, and recorded for posterity.<sup>90</sup> They also tended to see Nubian culture as historically layered—for instance, that there were pagan, Christian, and Muslim layers. They were seeking underlying symbolic or psychoanalytic patterns, and a good deal of attention was given to material culture, most notably to architecture and house decoration. Whether that conducted by Kennedy, Callender, Fahim, or Fernea, the social analysis in the survey is

structural-functionalist: institutions and practices work to sustain the whole. Thus crosscutting ties in Ismailiya hold the society together in the absence of a strong central core; their function is to provide integration (see also Zein 1966).<sup>91</sup> Lacking is a more interactionist perspective that would have seen culture as the outcome of choices made by people's dealings with each other. By focusing on historical origins, the team missed the dynamics of the society around them. The partial exception to this was the study of Shalashil, Dar al-Salam/Kanuba's leader.

The goal of promoting the careers of the research team members was largely achieved. The Americans all went on to solid professional positions, and many of the Egyptians managed to earn PhDs and then had careers as professional anthropologists. The Ferneas provided sympathetic commentary on Egypt for several decades. It is regrettable that none of the Egyptians returned to Egypt to train a younger generation of anthropologists, and that none of the Americans remained in Egypt to do so.

The final aim was to make available information which would assist Egyptian authorities to plan and execute Nubian resettlement and subsequent socio-economic development. One problem must be noted immediately here—that the whole project was too late to have any major input into the overall resettlement. We know that the Nubians (or at least the Nubian leadership) and the Egyptian government agreed to relocate the residents on land that could be reclaimed for agriculture in the Kom Ombo area, that they would be resettled as village units, and that the houses would be grouped according to size—all of this before the NES project even started. Thus it is not surprising that Fernea could only call for more empathy across 'cultural' boundaries between administrators and the Nubians, and that Fahim would take a similar line.

A second problem was that the anthropologists were expected to advise the government on how to deal with the Nubians, but not the reverse. As applied social scientists, the researchers could have undertaken a dual responsibility. The team had to deal with its 'client,' the administration, but at the same time should have tried to institute the 'triangle,' where they would advise both sides, keeping in mind that at the end of the day the anthropologists were responsible to the people among whom they are working. It is true that the advice given the administration was mostly construed to be also in the interest of the people.

As an illustration of the differences in approach between the three sets of actors, one can cite the debate over the personal involvement of Nubians in farming their allotted land. It was the intention of the government that

like all Egyptian farmers, the Nubians would do work on their land. Yet for a variety of reasons, many of the Nubians did not. Beginning with Fernea in 1962, the anthropologists tried to set out the reasons why this was not likely to happen. In general the Nubians hired others to farm their land while they did office work or migrated. They were already doing so in the newly irrigated areas of Ballana before the move. What should the position of the anthropologists have been—to help persuade the Nubians to farm, or to convince the government that the Nubian solution also worked? On the whole they chose the latter option, but sometimes were caught in the middle. Fahim, for instance, suspected that the Egyptian government wanted him to detail the extent to which Nubian farmers were renting out their land rather than farming it themselves as the law of the time required, so that they could crack down on the practice. He worried, “If I report my conclusions, it would most probably be the end of my research among the Nubians” (1977:85).

We can let Fahim sum up the importance of the published works:

In retrospect, the Ethnological Survey undoubtedly marked a major event in the development of anthropological research in Egypt. It provided opportunities for both Egyptian and foreign researchers to carry out fieldwork together and thus to gain and exchange experiences. Moreover, the survey allowed some Egyptian university graduates to be trained systematically in fieldwork. The different studies conducted within the survey resulted in the collection of significant data on presettlement Nubia (Fahim 1972a). Unfortunately, the volume of collected data is not reflected in the amount of material published thus far. Some foreign anthropologists collect as much data as possible, but before they have analyzed and published the materials, teaching duties or other research assignments prevent them from completing their original objectives (Fahim 1977:82).

## Notes

### 1. Nubian Resettlement and Anthropology

- 1 "Ethnological Survey of Nubia: Statement of Purpose and Organization," Social Research Center, May 10, 1961. Reprinted in this volume.
- 2 Speaking of the reluctance of the Nubians to move, Dafalla (1975:296–97) noted, "The Kenuz, whose country had been devastated as a result of the two raisings of the Aswan Dam, had refused an offer by King Fuad to resettle them at Kom Ombo, and had built their villages on top of the rocky banks of the Nile."
- 3 See "whc.unesco.org/en/activities/172/", accessed May 13, 2009. One consequence of this is that the stretch of the Nile south of Aswan included not only our intrepid anthropologists, but also many archaeologists of all specializations and from a wide variety of countries. Their goal was to document and perhaps save as much of the archaeological record as possible. They were largely successful.
- 4 About 50,000 Nubians and others in the Sudan had to be resettled from the town of Wadi Halfa and about twenty-seven villages, but their story is separate and different. See Shaw (1967), Fahim (1973), Dafalla (1975), and Salem-Murdock (1989). Some Sudanese Nubians, however, managed to avoid relocation and eventually settled in New Wadi Halfa (see Kronenberg 1987). The Sudanese–Egyptian border was arbitrarily set in 1899 at the twenty-second parallel, and the populations on the two sides of the border shared languages and basic culture, so the different resettlement experiences are fertile grounds for comparison.
- 5 See letter of John F. Hilliard, Ford Foundation Representative in Cairo to F.C. Ward, Ford Foundation office, New York, recounting a conversation with Marei. Document in AUC archives.
- 6 Marei's support, if critical, was only present in the beginning. Laila El-Hamamsy was personally acquainted with Marei and was in touch with him concerning this project. After his dismissal, the main contact ministry for the SRC project became the Ministry of Social Affairs rather than the Ministry of Agriculture, and the contact person was General Mohamed Safwat. Marei later came back into favor, but that is another story.
- 7 A *nabia* was also referred to as an '*umudiya*, that is, a unit under an '*umda*. The word *balad* also occurs. Some authors use the word 'village' for what we call here a district. Throughout there was a distinction between the actual settlements and the districts into which they were grouped.
- 8 In fact the census omits the district of al-Dirr with twelve settlements on which we have information from Hohenwart 1965.

- 9 Dafalla (1974:64) points out that Nubians from the Sukkot region of the Sudan were key staff in the Egyptian royal palace under Kings Fuad and Farouk.
- 10 The Arabic-speaking 'Ababda live in small groups in the Nile Valley from Qena southward, and also as nomads in the Eastern Desert. They are said to be an offshoot of the Beja of the Sudan, although some claim an Arabian origin.
- 11 This has notably been fostered by photographic representations, music, dances, and so on labeled simply as "Nubian." An example is the photographs by Gerster and Eid in "Nubians in Egypt" (Fernea and Gerster 1973).
- 12 Charles Callender wrote his PhD thesis on the Algonquin Indians of the US Great Lakes. John Kennedy wrote his on the Tarahumara of northern Mexico. Robert Fernea was exposed to American Indians in Oregon and at Reed College and often articulated an interest in them (see Dishaw et al 2006:176). Also John Provinse (1897–1965), the applied anthropologist who was the SRC director from 1954 to 1957, had been previously assistant commissioner of the US Bureau of Indian Affairs (Murphy 1979:117). He was succeeded by Laila el-Hamamsy, who had earned her doctorate in anthropology at Cornell (1954) on the basis of research among the Navajo Indians. She was the director of the SRC at the time of the survey.
- 13 Some of these reconstructions revolved around the role of ancient Egypt, but that is another story. See for instance W.J. Perry (1923) and A.M. Hocart (1936). Hocart was professor of sociology and anthropology at Cairo University from 1934 until his death in 1939.
- 14 The Outline of Cultural Materials of the HRAF was designed to facilitate comparison, but it also provided a useful framework for indexing field materials. See below.
- 15 Laila Shukry El-Hamamsy was associated with one such project as a graduate student at Cornell in 1952: the Southwest Project, part of the Cornell Studies in Culture and Applied Science (see El-Hamamsy 1957:111). Charles Callender was affiliated with the Fox Project at the University of Chicago in the 1950s.
- 16 Though cultural history was discussed by Fernea, Callender, Kennedy, Geiser, and others. For instance, see Fernea (1973:7–16).
- 17 Callender letter to Fernea, November 26, 1964, NAA. The Ford Foundation was dissatisfied with both these terms, and referred to the activity as the "Nubian *Resettlement* Survey."
- 18 See Harold Barclay's account of his experience at AUC in 1956–59 (Barclay 2005).

## 2. Anthropological Encounters in Nubia

- 19 Note that the initiative for this study came from Fernea and AUC; the project was not 'assigned' to the university. Hence it was not well timed from the point of view of supplying information to the government. On the other hand, Ahmed Abu-Zeid noted in a June 2008 interview that he and another had been engaged to do some preliminary reconnaissance work, but had recommended that the SRC be selected as the group to proceed.
- 20 John Wilson was a leading Egyptologist at the U. of Chicago and much involved in the projects to save the ancient monuments of Nubia (Wilson 1972:145–65).
- 21 See Murdock et al 1971. Murdock and his colleagues established a set of categories for all cultural materials to facilitate cross-cultural comparisons. Here the categories were being used as a kind of ready-made index for the data collected. There were eighty-eight broad categories, each of which was subdivided further into subcategories. This implied a certain theoretical orientation. With time, anthropological interests shifted and some of the categories became out of date as did the entire notion that a culture was a bounded whole which could be reduced to isolated bits of information.
- 22 Horton himself earned a PhD in anthropology from Harvard in 1962, based on fieldwork in Syria. Scudder and Horton were distant cousins. The Danforth Foundation convened its fellows for a summer meeting in Michigan, and this is where Fernea and Scudder first met.
- 23 From AUC, with undergraduate degrees in the social sciences: Fadwa el Guindi (BA 1960), Sohair Mehanna (BA 1960, MA Tufts 1963), Samiha El Katsha (BA 1958, MA 1969), Nawal el-Messiri (BA 1960, MA 1965), Bahiga Haikal (BA 1960), Hind Abou Seoud (BS 1958, MA 1965), Aziza Rashad (MA, Occidental 1954), Nadia Youssef (MA Oriental Studies 1958), Karim Durzi (BA economics 1956). From Cairo University: Omar Abdel Hamid, Fikri Abdul Wahab (BA 1961), Hussein Fahim (BA 1955, MA Alexandria 1962), Zeinab Gamal, Asaad Nadim (BA 1953, MA 1963). From Alexandria University: Abdul Hamid el Zein (BA 1958, MA AUC, 1966). From Ain Shams University: Afaf al-Dib (and postgraduate training in England). Hind Abou Seoud could have joined the field phase but instead went to the EARIS Quta project; she was nursing her child and Laila El-Hamamsy gave her an assignment closer to Cairo.
- 24 The government encouraged expeditions by painters and other artists to document Nubia as they saw it in the years before the High Dam lake began to flood the land. "The acting Minister of Culture, Dr. Sarwat Okasha, invited 20 artists and architects to visit the region before it disappeared. The Nile

- steamer *Dakka* was put at their disposal and they chose to visit the villages rather than the antiquities” (Fathy 1999:v, orig. 1978). See also Ministry of Culture and National Guidance (1960).
- 25 Two brothers, Omar and Sherif el-Hakim, traveled on their own to Nubia at this time, although not affiliated with the SRC project. Sherif was then a student in anthropology at AUC and attended the 1964 Aswan conference, while Omar was a budding architect. Both later became professionals in their chosen fields. See Fathy in el-Hakim (1999).
  - 26 We lack the proposal submitted to the Ford Foundation, but this early progress report probably conveys the gist of it. See also Fernea’s report on the first trip upriver, analyzed above, and Fernea (1963).
  - 27 Abou Zeid earned his BA from Alexandria University in 1944 and his PhD in anthropology from Oxford in 1956.
  - 28 Najwa Shukairy’s thesis dealt with obligations on death occasions for a small sample from Adindan, a subset of Geiser’s sample (see Shukairy 1966). After this phase of the project was completed, Shahira el-Sawy independently conducted research for her MA (el-Sawy 1965) in anthropology based on interviewing a small set of women from Ballana. She was linked to the SRC but not to the Survey.
  - 29 Durzi left the project when he migrated to Canada in 1962.
  - 30 At the time, Spector sky was a graduate student in Arabic working at the SRC, while Slocum was on leave from her undergraduate studies at Radcliffe. Spector sky remembers that she was instructed to keep notes on any encounters and observations, even though she was not an anthropologist. Slocum did not take notes, but joined in the daily debriefings.
  - 31 From “Research proposal—community study in Mahas speaking region,” SRC archives, pp. 3–4.
  - 32 In fact the general pattern throughout was that notes were written by hand into notebooks in the field, then translated into English if needed and typed up in clean form back at the SRC in Cairo by Yvonne Shunbo, Hikmet Wassef, Linda Sayegh, and other typists.
  - 33 He retained his skepticism, and later remarked, “We functional-structuralists take with us to the field categories of analysis with which to relieve our intellectual frustrations and anxieties as quickly as possible. We look for families, households, lineage, councils, and courts, and behold, we find them,” before pointing out that the utility of these concepts for comparative work was limited (1972:100).
  - 34 Situations similar to Adindan have been recorded for the northern Sudan (Omer 1985; Ohtsuka 1996).

- 35 The potential comparison between the adjacent villages of Ballana and Adindan was not realized. Ballana had agricultural development linked to a new pump scheme, while Adindan had perhaps the most traditional agriculture in Nubia at the time. See el Zein's comments in his paper for the Aswan conference (1966:298–300).
- 36 Marie Furey was married to Charles Callender.
- 37 Mohamed Riad and Kawthar Abdel Rasoul also researched in some of the 'Aliqat Arab communities (Riad and Abdel Rasoul 1969, 2007).
- 38 The material in the Callender file in the National Anthropological Archives (NAA) of the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., arrived there serendipitously. Apparently the material was abandoned in his house in Cleveland when he died, and was only discovered more than a decade later by a subsequent owner. She offered them to the NAA, which then proceeded to identify and catalog them, with the help of Callender's erstwhile field research assistant, Fadwa el Guindi. Today they constitute one of the major surviving collections of material from the NES.
- 39 Others mentioned for either Cairo or Dahmit were "Abdel Megid Ahmad Hussein, Nadia Rushdy, Nawal el-Messiri, and Omar Abdel Hamid. The interviews by Hind Abu Seoud and Zeinab Gamal were exceptionally valuable."
- 40 Many of these notes survive in the NAA Callender file, and there are samples at AUC.
- 41 NAA, Callender file.
- 42 See also Fogel (1997:163 etc.) where there are extensive notes on his ascending and descending kin. Fogel notes that Fathey Bahr passed away shortly after the move (p. 265).
- 43 Both sketches from Charles Callender, preface to field notes, NAA.
- 44 Later she married Sylvia Kennedy's brother.
- 45 Grauer reports that Georg Gerster was on the quay in Aswan photographing the arrival when her boat landed (see plates 75 and 76 in Fernea and Gerster 1973).
- 46 Other settlements were in Abu Rish, a zone just north of Aswan, in Gharb Aswan, across the Nile from the city, in Isna, Luxor, and elsewhere.
- 47 Actually Taha Mohammad Soliman Mahmud.
- 48 From "The Nubian Ethnological Survey", AUC archives, documents and records of presidents McClain and Bartlett. This is extracted from a longer document and is undated, but on internal evidence was probably drafted by Kennedy in 1965.
- 49 Sohair Mehanna, who had attended *zar* ceremonies in the Delta village of Tafahna for another research project (see Saunders 1977), collected the

- information on *zar* and other topics. Kennedy also used field data from Bahiga Haikal in Ballana, and from Zeinab Gamal (Kennedy 1978:223).
- 50 Kennedy also made a point of using theoretical arguments from the Freudian canon (1978:138–49).
  - 51 Similarly, Fernea noted how helpful it was to him in drafting the text of *Nubians in Egypt* to have Hamza el Din, the Nubian musician, nearby in Texas (E. Fernea and R. Fernea 1991:3).
  - 52 “The present study is the result of a short field-work in Sayalla (Jan.–Feb. 1962) which was executed by the grant given to Dr. M. Riad by SRC of the American University in Cairo, accepted by the kind permissions of the Ain Shams University” (Riad and Abdel Rasoul 1962:133).
  - 53 Named the *Linda* after Linda Sayegh, a secretary at the SRC. The boat in Ballana was the *Susan* (E. Fernea 1970:228), presumably after Susan Spectorisky.
  - 54 Nadim and Riad had known each other at the Institute of African Studies. Riad, a few years older, had even taught Nadim a course on African geography there.
  - 55 Hohenwart does not mention that al-Dirr was a center for autocratic Kashef rule in this part of the Nile Valley, apart from a brief reference to the ruined castle.
  - 56 Exhibit “Nubien: eine Kultur versinkt” [“Nubia: a culture submerged”] at the Vienna Anthropology Museum, December 1964 to March 1965.
  - 57 Margo Veillon, Annie Gismann, Georg Gerster, and Robert Fernea traveled between Khartoum to Wadi Halfa, from November 9 to December 7, 1962. See Bruno Ronfard, ed., *Margo Veillon: Witness of a Century*, Cairo, AUC Press, 2007:253. Veillon and Gerster were together in Aswan from January 15 to February 25, 1962, and again in June when they traveled to Ballana. Around February Gerster also visited Fernea’s team in Ballana (Slocum interview). Thirteen of Veillon’s photographs were used in Kennedy (1978).
  - 58 At least 16 of Eid’s photos were used in the 1973 book, and others in Kennedy 1978 (12) and in Fernea and Fernea 1991 (13), so 41 in all. Sixty-one were included in an exhibit at AUC in 2005. Many others remain in the SRC–NES archives, but the collection is incomplete. Some are missing from the folder, and we have no color slides.
  - 59 Of course there were many other photographers, both professional and amateur. Two professional photographers from *Al Abram* took photos: Antoune Albert and the Nubian photographer Fathy Hussein of Ambarakab district. The definitive identification of photographs of 1960s Old Nubia and the move has yet to be accomplished.

- 60 Another text explicitly dealing with Nubian architecture during this period is El-Hakim (1999). House decoration is dealt with in Armgard Grauer's thesis (1968). There have been several PhD theses in the UK and the US exploring the architectural and planning dimensions of the resettlement.
- 61 Fernea's experience with this is not atypical of many efforts to bring anthropology to bear on issues of public concern. See for instance Scudder and Colson (1979:242–43) on their impact in Gwembe resettlement in Zambia.
- 62 In fact, after the resettlement of the first two villages (Dabud and Dahmit) in late 1963, there was a pause of several months before the remaining villages were moved in rapid succession in mid-1964. Whether this pause allowed for the stock-taking Fernea proposed is not known. Moreover, during the adjustment to the new settlements Nubians refused to be left out of the decision-making process and frequently imposed their preferences (see Serageldin 1982; for the Sudan see Dafalla 1975).
- 63 This presentation echoes but does not cite Clyde Kluckhohn's "Covert culture and administrative problems" (1943) written with respect to relations between Navajo Indians and Americans.
- 64 And one wonders about the role of the *kushaf* in nineteenth century Nubia.
- 65 Fernea notes, in a sign of the times, that the fact that the meeting was held in a neutral setting in Aswan "meant that the government officials attending did not have to seek any special permission to associate with foreigners or go to a 'foreign' institution." Fernea "Report on the Symposium on Contemporary Nubia" 1964: 4, SRC archives.
- 66 This was Andreas Kronenberg, see above.
- 67 Located in what is now Harare, Zimbabwe.
- 68 On February 15, 1965, Fadwa el Guindi wrote to Charles Callender, "I am working with Zein on the analysis of the Ballana men interviews." These were perhaps the interviews that Zein did in late 1962 (see above).
- 69 This was the procedure followed at HRAF headquarters in New Haven (Murdock et al 1971:xv).
- 70 He did subsequent research on the Ainu in Japan (Peng and Geiser 1977).
- 71 His subsequent research focused either on the Gwembe Tonga of Zambia, displaced by the Kariba dam, or on the issue of large dams in general (see Scudder 2005). He is emeritus professor of anthropology at the California Institute of Technology, and a former commissioner of the World Commission on Dams.
- 72 He did subsequent research in Morocco and Afghanistan, in addition to general writing on the Arab World (see Fernea and Fernea 1997).
- 73 Later on he did fieldwork on the use of *qat* in Yemen (Kennedy 1987).

- 74 A new SRC project in the Western Desert of Egypt was a smaller-scale model of the Nubian project (ca. 1965–67; see Bujra 1973 and Obermeyer 1973). This was in cooperation with Alexandria University but it was halted after the June 1967 War.

### 3. After the Move

- 75 They were settled according to their district of residence at the time, so that Kenuz colonies in Fadija areas like Ballana, or ‘Ababda from Sayalla, were assigned houses in those villages.
- 76 See the photo of a Dahmit house in Fogel 1997; Fahim 1993: 429 says that seventy-nine houses in New Dahmit had to be rebuilt.
- 77 In the same letter dated February 15, 1965, cited above, Fadwa el Guindi noted, “During the holidays I went with the Ferneas and Zein by Land Rover to Aswan, visiting Ballana and Dahmit.”
- 78 In her Final Report to the Nubian Project Supplementary Grant, April 8, 1968, Laila El-Hamamsy noted only that, “Several research assistants and senior staff members of the Nubian project have visited periodically the resettlement areas in Kom Ombo to investigate social and cultural changes following resettlement.”
- 79 On the other hand, a Nubian told Fahim, “If we want to maintain our old customs, we must maintain our Nubian architecture” (1979:84). Either way architecture is heavily implicated.
- 80 A parallel study was conducted in Abis near Alexandria by Dr. Helmi Ragheb Tadros.
- 81 They were from AUC but not from the SRC. They represented a somewhat younger cohort than the NES team. El-Hakim had attended the 1964 Aswan conference.
- 82 In 1991 the section on Nubia was combined with the essay from *Nubians in Egypt* and a summary from a conference in 1987 to produce *Nubian Ethnographies*.
- 83 In a letter to Laila El-Hamamsy dated May 24, 1971, Fernea noted, “I have finished the Nubian manuscript. . . . There is no jargon; I wrote for a general audience and ignored theoretical by-ways which would have only a professional interest.” Fernea has also said that he wrote it in simple language to facilitate translation into Arabic.
- 84 See Nadia H. Youssef, “The demographics of immigration: a socio-demographic profile of the foreign born population in New York State,” NY: Center for Migration Studies, 1992.
- 85 Letter from John F. Hilliard, Ford Representative in Cairo to Dr. F.C. Ward, Ford Foundation, NY, discussing the “AUC Nubian Research Project,”

- November 24, 1960. Copy in AUC/SRC archives. See note on Marei above. For a similar Ford Foundation activity in Iran, see Nemchenok (2009).
- 86 From an unsigned and undated document entitled "Proposal for an Ethnological Survey of Nubia," returned to AUC by the Ford Foundation. Copy in AUC/SRC archives.
  - 87 "Request for Grant Action," January 30, 1961, internal Ford Foundation document recommending a grant to AUC for \$100,000 under the title of "Nubian resettlement survey." Copy in AUC/SRC archives.
  - 88 Harvey Hall, "Terminal Review and Evaluation [of two grants on Nubian resettlement survey]," internal report, Ford Foundation, New York, summer 1974, with additional comments by Courtney Nelson, Terry Prothro (both August 8, 1974), and Samuel E. Bunker (July 26, 1974).
  - 89 Kennedy points out the similarity of Silwa as presented by Hamed Ammar (1954) to the Nubian cases. Silwa is an Upper Egyptian community a short distance north of Kom Ombo.
  - 90 Fernea much later noted (1995:2), and thinking of his work in general: "There was what now seems an innocence in these studies, a belief in realities and a search for truth, a faith in the reliability of my own experience."
  - 91 The classic study of the role of crosscutting ties in creating social integration is Elizabeth Colson's 1953 article. Colson was Scudder's senior partner in the Kariba research.

**The Nubian Ethnological Survey**  
Sample Publications 1960–1990



# Introduction

Nicholas S. Hopkins and Sohair R. Mehanna

## From Ecology to Identity

Out of more than 125 published and unpublished pieces by at least twenty-eight different authors associated with the Nubian Ethnological Survey at various times between 1961 and 1965, we have selected sixteen to give a sense of the range and development of the project. Many of these sixteen are either unpublished or were published in sources that are now out of print and difficult to access. Our goal is to illustrate and exemplify the research process in the NES and portray some of the changes among Nubians. Readers should also consult *Nubian Ceremonial Life* (Kennedy 2005) for further excellent accounts.

Some theoretical themes appear including ecology, migration, forms of community solidarity, and identity or ethnicity. The adaptation of the various Nubian communities to their physical and social environment was one of the starting points of the research project. We have called attention to the ecological adaptation of groups of Nubians to their shrinking physical environment. A large part of that adaptation involved the migration of men in search of work to support the women and children at home, as well as the retired. Both the range of the migration and the nature of the jobs have shifted through time. As Nubians have relocated and moved into the wider socio-economic environment, employment and professionalization have become significant issues.

One can see in the different writings of the NES team a gradual shift from ecological adaptation to identity. As Nubians have moved from a homeland to resettlement to a kind of diaspora, how has their sense of identity evolved? It is common to think of 'identity' as related to an unchanging essence (folklore, language, social organization) yet theoretical consideration of the topic now emphasizes how identity emerges from contact with others in social situations.

Our selections fall into five groups. The first includes two overviews: an early presentation of the plans drafted by Robert Fernea in 1961 and a more retrospective approach taken by Hussein Fahim from a collection devoted to long-term field research in social anthropology. Both stress the need to provide a baseline for further study while also generating ideas to facilitate resettlement and the well-being of the Nubians.

The second section includes five pieces that analyze in considerable detail the social ecology that researchers encountered in the different communities on the eve of the flood. The five authors—Charles Callender/Fadwa el Guindi, Abdul Hamid el Zein, Mohamed Riad, Thayer Scudder, and Peter Geiser—describe and analyze the economic and environmental situation the residents of the Nubian homeland were facing at the time of resettlement. The shrinking resource base included agriculture and trade, and the response was a slow but steady migration of men and of families to new areas. Callender/El Guindi, El Zein, and Riad present monographic accounts of their research districts, while Scudder and Geiser provide overviews of the situation in Nubia. Scudder and Geiser were interested in clarifying the role of labor migration in the Nubian experience, and relied on a combination of observational and statistical evidence.

The third grouping of papers includes two that describe community life in the Nubian villages on the eve of the evacuation. Callender analyzes the question of relations between men and women in Dahmit, reminding us that this rich topic was overlooked in the various studies although the implications of the gender imbalance provide rich material (Fernea and Fernea 1991:2). Anna Hohenwart-Gerlachstein summarizes her impressions of al-Dirr, underlining the strength of community solidarity. She refers to the social distinctions of rank and prestige that nonetheless existed, reflecting al-Dirr's earlier role as a political center in Nubia.

The values and practices of Islam, of course, played a key role in social life and community organization. Fahim analyzes the changes in Islamic practice that occurred in the resettled village of Dar al-Salam. He carefully links them to the changes in the economic and social setting of the village,

which combines elements from several Nubian villages in addition to being situated in an Upper Egyptian context. The changes he describes may be representative of the shifts in the broader Nubian society.

The fourth set of papers examines the process and immediate implications of resettlement itself. Mohamed Fikri Abdul Wahab, who was delegated to follow the actual move, reports on the problems that emerged during the early stages in a paper for the 1964 Aswan conference. In an unpublished piece from 1962, Fernea reflects on the potential difficulties in communication between the Nubians and the national authorities. He sketches out the stereotypes that Nubians and Egyptian administrators had of each other, explains Nubian ideas about farming, and stresses the indirect style of leadership found among the Nubians.

A year or so after the move, Fernea and Kennedy prepared a summary of the adaptation to the new environment. They emphasize the practicality of the Nubian approach, including the determination to avoid quarrels. It was still too early to present an evaluation of the relocation. However, they offer an upbeat view: "There is a new air of optimism" (p. 351). Writing a decade later, Fahim was less positive. There had been health problems and perhaps an increase in mortality, the houses had not worked out well, and there was the danger that a "dependency syndrome" was emerging.

The final two pieces look back on the move from a period of more than two decades. Hohenwart-Gerlachstein describes how she tried to develop a process of continuous research and monitoring carried out by interested Nubians, with some UNESCO support. In a sense, this paper picks up on the methodological issues raised in the first two papers, namely, how best to study the Nubians (or anyone else) in a continuing way, and how to make sure that the results of the research are shared with the Nubian population for its own benefit. Here the emphasis is less on the physical well-being of the Nubians and more on the oral literature and music. Nubian identity is seen as tied to the content of these expressions and the effort to maintain them.

Fernea and Alia Rouchdy see Nubian identity more in interactions with outsiders than in content (Barth 1969). The recentering of Nubian life to New Nubia seems to have reinforced the self-awareness of Nubians as a (single) ethnic group, even as retention of other markers such as language diminished. Nubian ethnicity is a matter of the collective interests as perceived by Nubians within Egyptian society, and it is sustained by the daily contacts between Nubians and others.

Thus from the plans of the early 1960s to the retrospectives of the late 1980s the Nubian situation is passed in review. The articles here represent

different aspects of that, and also reflect different methods and approaches. They also indicate some of the holes in Nubian research, mostly the poor documentation of the post-resettlement period. Various restrictions have curtailed research in New Nubia or among Nubians generally since the late 1960s, and thus our information is indirect and anecdotal and not based on intensive research. A comprehensive analysis of the implications of the resettlement has yet to be conducted, and must be on the agenda for the next generation. As it stands, this material outlines a chapter in the evolution of rural Egypt, if not Egypt in general, during this period.

# **Ethnological Survey of Nubia**

## **Statement of Purpose and Organization**

Robert A. Fernea \*

**T**he building of the High Dam at Aswan is central to the most comprehensive scheme of economic development yet undertaken by modern Egypt. Numerous far-reaching benefits will be realized by the High Dam, 1.3 million feddans of land will be available for cultivation for the first time, thousands of feddans of marginal land will be brought into full production, and a hydro-electric power source will be available for industrial development. These are among the most important contributions of the High Dam. For these advantages to be realized, a tremendous technological effort will be necessary. From the first stages of the Dam until the last acre of newly arable land is cultivated, the human factor will be crucially important, for not one of the benefits of the Dam can be realized without the success of such complex social adjustments as are involved in relocation, building of new communities, or establishment of new industries.

One of the first outstanding social consequences of the High Dam will be the removal of the population above Aswan whose land will be flooded as the early stages of the Dam are completed. Well before many of the famous antiquities of Upper Egypt are covered with water, the indigenous population of the area must be relocated in distant communities. The government

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\*This is adapted from a 1961 draft paper in the SRC files.

of the United Arab Republic (UAR) is planning for the relocation, which is scheduled to begin in the coming year and will continue for many months. The resettlement of the Nubian population in the region of Kom Ombo, north of Aswan, will involve nearly fifty thousand persons.

The history of resettlement projects elsewhere in the world has demonstrated that sociological studies may be of crucial importance in the success of such operations. Doing what from a technological and economic point of view seems best for the people involved does not always guarantee a satisfactory response from the resettlement groups. It cannot generally be assumed, for instance, that, given the opportunity, farming people will act to maximize agricultural output as economic planners might wish. Nor can we be certain that a group of people resettled in a new area will automatically build true communities in the full social and cultural sense of the word. If the many informal institutions and social relations which characterize human communities do not develop, problems of morale may disrupt production and not only result in local problems of social control, but also reduce the benefit of the resettlement projects to the whole nation. Comprehensive social research can help planners and administrators anticipate the problems arising during and after the process of resettlement, including why some people leave the land to work elsewhere, why some groups in a new community are unwilling to cooperate, and how new cropping systems and marketing arrangements can be introduced to the new community most successfully. These are the kinds of problems that may best be approached by understanding the original social system and cultural tradition. In addition, without benefit of a comprehensive picture of the original communities, no basis exists for accurately measuring specific social changes as revealed by literacy rates, standard of living indices, or population statistics.

When the fifty thousand Nubian people are resettled near Kom Ombo, they will have sufficient land to permit self-sustaining cultivation for the first time in many years. They will also be living for the first time in close proximity to the Sa'idi population of Upper Egypt. The loss of isolation and the shift in subsistence base are two of the new conditions of life in Kom Ombo that can be expected to result in changes in traditional Nubian culture. Obviously, there will be many other differences between the old and new locations that will encourage social change. For, although the Egyptian population above Aswan shares many patterns of living with that of the Northern Nile Valley, many differences exist between the two groups. The Nubian people are located far from the administrative centers of Egypt,

and geographic barriers have for generations prevented easy intercourse with the peoples to the North. Thus many aspects of Nubian culture are unique, reflecting an historic growth that has often been independent of outside influences. The narrowness of the Nile Valley above Aswan results in a natural scarcity of arable land; the first and second dams at Aswan have obliterated much of the small natural endowment. Under such circumstances special patterns of subsistence have developed, including city employment for Nubian men. Yet, in general, the Nubians have chosen to maintain homes in Nubia and are self-conscious about their unique status within the Egyptian community.

Several ministries of the UAR government have undertaken limited studies in the Nubian region. The Ministry of Social Affairs has undertaken several research projects in connection with specific problems that have arisen during the formulation of current resettlement plans. The Ministry of Culture and National Guidance has sent artists and folklorists to the region to record various aspects of traditional Nubian culture. However, an ethnological survey is needed to provide community analyses and specific regional studies, which insofar as possible will cover every aspect of contemporary Nubian life. Such a record and scientific analysis will be of value to the government authorities responsible for resettlement and for the future of the new Nubian communities in Kom Ombo. The information will not only help answer questions arising as Nubian resettlement is planned but will also permit new questions to be asked about the pre-High Dam life of the Nubians after they have been resettled and the present Nubian communities inundated. Ultimately, this study should also be of service to the government of the Egyptian Region and ultimately to the Nubian people themselves.

Not only will this ethnological study have practical value, now and in the future, but it will serve to record accurately the traditional culture of Nubia. It is unthinkable that a traditional way of life should pass out of existence without an adequate record of the art, oral literature, the institutions, and customs through which that way of life was expressed. Man's most unique achievement is his society and culture. Each such achievement teaches us something about the ultimate nature of man and advances us toward an understanding of universal human problems. While the new settlements in Kom Ombo will provide new opportunities for the Nubian people, they will also result in the gradual loss of traditional expressions of Nubian culture. If such expressions are to take their place in recorded human history, it must be through studies completed in the near future.

A comprehensive ethnological study of Egyptian Nubia is currently under way under the direction of the Social Research Center (SRC) of the American University in Cairo. Scholars and students from the universities of Cairo, Ain Shams, and Alexandria are participating in this study. The Ministry of Social Affairs, the Ministry of Culture and National Guidance, and the Ministry of Agrarian Reform have expressed interest in this project and concrete methods of cooperation are being sought. UNESCO has also expressed a willingness to help in any way possible.

### **Goals of the Ethnological Survey**

In light of the above statement, the specific goals of the Ethnological Survey may be stated as follows:

1. The study will result in a description and analysis of the contemporary culture and society of the Nubian peoples. Their traditional way of life will be recorded before the changes take place that will inevitably follow their resettlement.
2. The study will provide a body of information about the Egyptian Nubian population that may be used in meeting problems of resettlement in the coming years. This information will be available to all who are at present and will be in the future responsible for the development of the new communities of Nubians in Kom Ombo. By making available a detailed description and analysis of traditional Nubia, the course of social and economic development in the resettled communities may be better evaluated and guided.
3. The Ethnological Survey will also provide an opportunity for more young Egyptians to learn social research techniques while becoming personally acquainted with the peoples of Nubia. Young people with such experience may prove useful to the government for future work in the new settlements or in similar research projects undertaken by the government itself. Thus, the SRC is currently seeking students from Egyptian universities to work on the project and will also happily consider including on the staff persons from any government agency who may desire or need training in social research techniques.

### **Organization of the Research**

1. The first step in the ethnological study has already been completed with a two-month preliminary survey of the area between Shallal and the UAR–Sudanese border. Over two hundred villages in the forty-two *bal-ads* have been visited, and scores of persons interviewed in an attempt

to understand some of the major variations in the area, to select regions for more intensive study, and to provide background for the formulation of specific problems around which subsequent research is to be organized. The data of this study is now being analyzed and a preliminary report drafted.

2. The second phase of the project will get under way in the fall of 1961. Three anthropologists and their assistants will begin a year's residence in the three divisions of Nubia—the Kenuz, Arab, and Nuba regions respectively. In each of these the researchers will participate in and observe local life, interview individuals, and record events, gathering the raw material of the study upon which the final account and analysis will be based. Various specialists will assist in recording the arts and architecture of the area; and an ecological survey of the Nubian valley will also be carried out.
3. The third step in the research, a study of the Nubian population now resident in the cities of northern Egypt, is already in progress. The close social and economic ties between the Nubians working in urban centers and their relatives south of Aswan makes a study in Cairo or in other cities essential to complete the picture of Nubian life. With agricultural land available in Kom Ombo, the Nubian population will be less dependent on city employment than at the present time. Many men, now working in cities, will have to decide between continued urban employment and returning to farm life. Resettlement will change the position of the Nubians resident in cities vis-à-vis their southern relatives. These factors as well as others make the urban aspect of the survey of great practical and theoretical importance.
4. The final step will be accomplished after the fieldwork is finished; it includes the write-up and analysis of the research.

### **Administration of the Ethnological Survey**

A grant from the Ford Foundation to the SRC of the American University in Cairo has provided the funds to make this study possible. The final responsibility for the administration of this project thus lies with the SRC. The planning and execution of the survey is being directed by professional anthropologists, both Egyptian and American; one of these anthropologists is acting as project coordinator.

To maximize the practical value of this study, the social scientists conducting this research need to know what information may be of particular interest to the government officials responsible for the settlement. Furthermore, the

advice and counsel of government employees and others who have already studied aspects of Nubian life may be of great value. Thus an advisory committee is being set up to facilitate discussion and the exchange of information between government officials, survey staff members, and others. The director of the SRC is inviting ministries concerned with Nubia to select representatives to serve on the advisory committee. The Advisory Committee will function:

1. To permit exchanges of information and ideas between the research staff, government officials, and others.
2. To prevent duplication of research efforts, so that the SRC survey does not repeat studies already made by government agencies.
3. To allow the research staff to periodically report to persons concerned with Nubian resettlement on the progress and results of the Ethnological Survey.
5. To encourage the ministries to suggest ways in which the training function of the survey can be strengthened, for example, by adding ministry employees to the project staff for stated periods (the addition of such persons will, of course, depend on the needs of the project at any given time).

The advisory committee is essential to the success of the Ethnological Survey, for it is only by following the suggestions of persons responsible for resettlement that the full practical advantage of this study can be realized. Furthermore, it is essential that the body of information which will develop as this study progresses be available to those who may make use of it. It is sincerely hoped that the interested government ministries will consider the Ethnological Survey a useful and worthwhile contribution to the work of resettlement.

# Field Research in a Nubian Village

## The Experience of an Egyptian Anthropologist

Hussein M. Fahim\*

### Introduction

Kanuba (pseudonym) is the village with which this chapter is concerned. It is one of several villages that Egyptian Nubians established below Aswan in the Nile Valley as a result of the inundation of their lands when the first Aswan Dam (built in 1902) was twice raised, in 1912 and 1933. Prior to the construction of the new Aswan High Dam during the 1960s, Egypt's Nubian land extended along the Nile banks between the city of Aswan and the Sudanese border. Following the inundation of this land, the remaining Nubians moved in 1964 to a new site. They are now settled on recently reclaimed lands in the Kom Ombo area, some fifty kilometers north of Aswan and close to Kanuba. In their new location, which has become known as 'New Nubia,' Nubians have been provided with schools, health facilities, agricultural services, and a greater opportunity to become part of the larger Egyptian society.

Though all of Egypt's nearly 120,000 Nubians share in their nation's Islamic traditions and have similar social organization and cultural values, they have their own distinct lifestyle and language.

Due to the scarcity of arable land in the old Nubian region, the migration of young men to work in towns and cities had increased over the years

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preceding the relocation in the 1960s in connection with the High Dam. Because of their reputation for honesty and cleanliness, many were sought as domestic servants. Nearly half of the Nubian population of Egypt presently work and live in major cities and towns outside Nubia.

While the richness of antiquities in Old Nubia has attracted students of past civilization since the early decades of this century, it was the construction of the Aswan High Dam and the necessity to relocate approximately one hundred thousand Nubians (including some fifty thousand in Sudan) that prompted interest for the study of the contemporary civilization of the Nubian people (Fahim 1972).

## **Some Aspects of Fieldwork in Kanuba**

### **Initial Stages**

My research connection with Nubians began in 1963. I was then a research assistant in the Social Research Center (SRC) of the American University in Cairo. I was assigned for fieldwork with John Kennedy, an American anthropologist who was at that time the chief investigator of the Kanuba study. Several years earlier, the SRC had begun an ethnological survey in Old Nubia, under the direction of Robert Fernea, in order to record the Nubian lifestyle prior to relocation in 1964. Funded by the Ford Foundation and undertaken in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Affairs, the survey was also to provide information and recommendations to the government relocation authorities for possible incorporation into the planning and execution of the resettlement scheme. As to Kennedy's study, its objective was to identify and analyze changes in a Nubian village relocated some thirty years earlier, to provide clues to the type of future changes that could be expected in the Old Nubian villages that were soon to be relocated to the Kom Ombo area.

Prior to the selection of the research site, Kennedy, Samiha El Katsha (another SRC research assistant), and I went to Old Nubia in February 1963 for a two-week field trip to familiarize ourselves with its environment and current way of life. In the spring of 1963 we surveyed those Nubian communities that had relocated themselves in Daraw following the first and second heightening of the Aswan Dam in 1912 and 1933. Daraw is a little market town located some thirty-five kilometers north of Aswan. Our task was to choose a village research site. We rented a house in Daraw where the Kennedys (John, his wife, and two children), Samiha, and I stayed for nearly two months. When Kanuba was chosen as the research setting, we used to commute daily between Daraw and the village, a distance of some four kilometers, until we were able

to rent a house in Kanuba. These first two months of commuting, in my view, were the most difficult period of our fieldwork. It was then that I encountered the challenge of anthropological training.

It was a tough time, though with many pleasant memories. Kennedy and I used to be received in the village guest room or sit outdoors with a few interested informants. I still recall the afternoon when a hot sandstorm blew up and everybody ran inside his house for protection, leaving us alone. We protected ourselves by staying in our Landrover and later drove back to Daraw looking depressed, deeply silent. The next day we went to the village to proceed with our work hoping that there would be no storm or, should one occur, that we would be given shelter. Our breakthrough was one week later when, as I recall, a Nubian was courteous enough to invite us to his house for a cup of tea.

In the fall of 1963 we moved to Kanuba, eight of us living in a four-room house. Two more assistants joined us, Sohair Mehanna and Omar Abdel Hamid. We soon appreciated the convenience of living in the village rather than being daily commuters. Yet that meant more pressure in terms of fieldwork and related sensitivities. We made a good entry to the village in that we succeeded in having the people accept our presence. We had still to prove our goodwill and good conduct. Villagers were surprised to see university people from Cairo willing to share and appreciate their life style. Yet, they had their suspicions and doubts. That was why, as I was told later, we were given a place located close to the village headman's house—so we would be under close observation and possible control. It was a village decision, so I was told. To them, our research team seemed peculiar in composition. Our sharing one house was also puzzling.

Our living together was an experience for me. I shared a room with Omar. The Kennedys squeezed into another room, leaving the third room for Sohair and Samiha. The fourth room was used as a living quarter where we took our meals and held our work discussions. Our cook, who was not a Nubian, came from a nearby village. He was in his late fifties, a kind and honest man. He used to come at eight o'clock every morning and leave in the late afternoon. We all liked and respected him. He always wondered what we were really doing, but he never bothered to enquire. The presence of the Kennedys, I felt, added a fine family touch to our life in Kanuba.

The team of research assistants was composed of two men and two women, members of the same generation but differing in education and social background. Then there were the Kennedys, representing a totally different culture. Cross-cultural situations emerged, some of which were

unpleasant while others were funny indeed. Mehanna and El Katsha had their entire education in American schools in Cairo while Abdel Hamid and I were educated in national schools. Our knowledge and comprehension of English was relatively limited. That made it difficult in the beginning to communicate properly our field data to Kennedy. We wrote our field notes in Arabic and had them translated for him.

The other problem I encountered arose from my going into the field with very little academic training in anthropological research. My college major was sociology and my graduate work was two years of coursework in social sciences. Yet my nearly eight years of work in the field of child welfare provided me with an invaluable training in dealing with practical realities and in learning about life and people from sources other than books and classroom instruction. To make up for my lack of formal training in anthropology, I registered for graduate work in the Anthropology Department of the American University and took anthropology books with me to Nubia. I should mention with gratitude the assistance rendered by Kennedy who discussed with me my readings and field observations.

By providing an outsider's perspective, Kennedy, a foreign anthropologist, helped me a great deal by forcing me to verify my observations and interpretations. As a native of the culture, I also often criticized his propositions and conclusions. During the first four or five months, Kennedy and I used to go together wherever work took us: weddings, ceremonial events, and market days. Later on, I used to go alone to observe particular events and to seek information on specific issues. The entire team used to spend an hour or two every evening reporting on the day's achievements and telling anecdotes; we also used to lay our plans for the following day's work. In the morning, we used to receive small white pocket cards full of further questions that Kennedy had thought of during the night.

In collecting data, we used a variety of techniques, particularly observation and questioning informants. Samiha and I gathered quantitative information on household composition, occupational structure, and villagers' attitudes toward educational and occupational careers for their children. The research team also paid regular visits to New Nubia and observed closely the processes of initial adaptation to the new environment of villages then being resettled.

### **Subsequent Work in Kanuba**

Two years after the completion of this fieldwork in Kanuba, a research team returned to the region for a follow-up survey of continuity and change in New Nubia (Fernea and Kennedy 1966). Kanuba was also revisited. Other

than that one return visit, there were no formal plans to conduct a systematic longitudinal study in the village on the part either of the principal investigator or myself. Both Kennedy and I thought, however, that it would be interesting and significant if one of us (or perhaps both) could return to the village for a re-study after a number of years.

Between 1964 and 1966 the letters I received from Nubian friends often carried village news; informants also visited me at home in Cairo and in the office. During the summer of 1966, I made a two-week field trip to the village in order to fill some gaps in my data for my Master's thesis on rituals and culture change in Kanuba. In the fall of 1966, I left for two years to go to the United States to complete my graduate studies at the University of California, Berkeley. Upon my return, I made a field trip in February 1969 to New Nubia to update my material and to explore new research possibilities. During my one-month stay, I revisited Kanuba on several occasions.

In 1970, I was assigned as the principal investigator of a five-year research project to study and evaluate the agricultural scheme in New Nubia, especially as it related to the villagers' social structure and culture. This study was undertaken by the SRC at the request of the Egyptian Organization for Land Cultivation and Development (EOLCD). In the fall of 1970, I returned to New Nubia to design a survey schedule for collecting basic descriptive data on all resettled villages in the Kom Ombo area. In the winter of 1971, survey data was collected in the forty-three New Nubian villages as well as in Kanuba, which I added to the survey, by six research assistants from the SRC.

In September 1971, Kennedy and I visited Kanuba for one day (the maximum then allowed foreigners traveling in rural areas), while Kennedy was in Cairo to attend a conference. Constraints on research permits, especially for researchers associated with foreign institutions, kept me from the field for nearly two years. In 1973–74, I went to the United States on a one-year leave to write up my Nubian material at the California Institute of Technology. Upon my return, I paid a further visit to New Nubia. Then, in February and March 1974, I administered an interview schedule to a sample of 150 land holders in two of the New Nubian villages and also made a quick follow-up check on life and events in Kanuba.

### **Background Information on Kanuba**

Before I present some methodological issues and research findings from the Kanuba study, it seems appropriate to provide some background information on the village.

When Nubians began to settle in Kanuba in 1934, they planned to preserve their traditional economic and social patterns, yet several changes took place. Their initial efforts to farm the land failed due to scarcity of water for irrigation. They abandoned agriculture and sought work in big cities like Cairo and Alexandria. However, during the 1940s, individuals and families returned to the village to try cultivating the land once more. Some attempted to overcome the water problem by introducing elaborate mechanical means of irrigation. Though once again water proved to be beyond the reach of the pumps, these families decided to stay in the village. They were able to make their living by wage labor at jobs available either in local development projects or in government departments in neighboring cities. As Nubians succeeded in filling many clerical jobs in the region, the number of returnees increased. By 1964 the labor migration rate had dropped.

Since the establishment of the village in 1934, various changes corresponding with the change in occupational structure have taken place. Social organization, for example, is no longer based on lineage and tribal affinity. Nuclear families have become increasingly important. Leadership has shifted from the traditional headman and group of elders to a village association consisting of community representatives with a board of elected officers. Actual leadership is now in the hands of a group of educated young people striving to make Kanuba a model village with high standards of education, health, and economic progress. This group is headed by a village leader who is 'modern-oriented' and who wishes to introduce 'progress' to the village in the areas of agriculture, education, utilities, health services, and the like.

Education, once primarily in Qur'anic schools, is now provided by government schools. Kanubans show a remarkable interest in educating their children through secondary school and even through the university level. Female education has become desirable and women have recently begun to play a role in the political life of the village. Women are now registered to vote in the election of local representatives for the National Assembly, an unprecedented phenomenon in the conservative Aswan region.

The village aspirations toward progress correspond with the Egyptian government's plans to introduce change and to promote development in the Aswan region in connection with the construction of the High Dam. Nevertheless, the village leadership did not wait for change to come; rather, it worked with both local and national authorities to secure the greatest advantages for the village. In 1963, a health clinic was built in the village and pure drinking water was made available through several faucet units. The Aswan Housing Department, with the collaboration of the village board, prepared a

new design for the village and, in 1964, began constructing houses to replace those destroyed by termites.

In 1966, the village affiliated itself administratively with New Nubia to gain access to services and advantages offered to New Nubian settlers by the national government. By 1970 the construction of 160 new houses, a village club, and a ten-class primary school was completed. In 1973 the village had electricity connected to the houses and to the streets. Many villagers have radio sets but only one, thus far, has bought a television set. There is also a television set installed in the village club. Furthermore the village persuaded the government to finance the building of a large, nicely designed mosque—currently a village landmark.

Perhaps the most important event in village history has been the success of the village leadership in working out a plan with the Ministry of Agriculture to reclaim and cultivate some 900 acres of village land on a long-term credit. Between 1968 and 1970 the land was reclaimed. Managed by the villagers as a cooperative farm, in the following years it turned green. If I had not visited the village since 1964, I would find it difficult to identify the village site. The cooperative farm has affected almost all aspects of village life as well as the people's aspirations. Reflecting the current national policy of 'economic openness' following the 1973 War, informants talk about a ten-year plan which would include new houses for all families, a youth center equipped with a swimming pool, a consumer cooperative department, an animal husbandry project, and an agro-industrial factory.

Cultivation of the reclaimed land interestingly enough did not change the village occupational structure. Working men remained in their jobs outside the village while the farm is worked with hired labor from neighboring communities under the supervision of the elderly village men. On their return to Kanuba in the evening, the working men meet in the club to attend to the business affairs of the farm. In time of need, women and children help out on the farm. Each is assigned a task under the supervision of some village men. The village farm, in brief, cemented the existing community spirit and made life in the village socially and economically much better—to quote one informant. For the villagers of Kanuba, their cooperative farm is a symbol of dreams that can come true.

## **Methodological Issues**

### **The Villagers' Attitude**

The village leader once said to me, "We really never entirely understood what you [referring to the Kennedy research team] were doing and why.

But we liked you very much.” On another occasion he said, “You were under the village scrutiny for a long time. As you proved to be good people, I instructed the people to cooperate with you and have you go to their homes.” Actually, the timing of Kennedy’s study in 1963–64 came during a very critical period of the village history when hopes for change were revived, along with measures to achieve them. The village was very sensitive to our residence, highly concerned with our doings, and usually curious to know of our writings. I recall that when Kennedy went to present a paper on the village occupational structure and on job preferences before a Symposium on Contemporary Nubia held in Aswan in January 1964, the village sent an English-language schoolteacher to attend the meeting and report back to the village. The people of Kanuba seemed happy to be a subject for study that they hoped in turn would make their village known.

The village’s attitude toward me personally has been constantly changing according to my status, age, and role. During my original contact with the village, I was viewed as an *ustaz*, a respectable employee with a university background who was helping Dr. Kennedy in his study. The fact that I was married and had children impressed the villagers favorably and my coming to work in their village while leaving my wife and children in Cairo did not seem abnormal to them as they themselves often did the same. The Kanubans’ attitude toward me then was relatively informal and extremely cordial.

During my first visit after my return for the United States in 1968, I was deeply moved by the warmth of their reception, though I felt a change in their attitude. Friendly and hospitable though they were, they were nonetheless relatively formal and gently reserved. Their formality was reflected in their speech. I was called ‘Doctor’ rather than *ustaz*. Their reserved attitude reflected my affiliation with an American institution at a time when the relationship between Egypt and the United States was strained. Informants also expressed their disappointment about the delay in publishing research findings on their village.

My return to Kanuba on a government assignment raised my status and their formality subsequently increased. I was not taken to the leader’s house as previously but rather to the village club where people grouped to greet me while children lined up to clap whenever I passed them. This official-like reception made me feel “out of place and as a stranger in my own home,” as I once told the village leader. He pointed out that such a reception is a village ritual to express affection and esteem. He also added that my concern for the village, as implied by my regular visits, was admired. Because of my new role and status, my services to the village were anticipated.

The villagers of Kanuba were aware that their village was not included in the agricultural scheme that I was studying for the government; yet they felt that I could help them meet the village's needs through my official contacts. This feeling was clearly expressed in conversations with informants, especially during my most recent visit. They talked about what the village had achieved and much more about their aspirations. Their expectation of me was quite clear.

### **The Researcher's Attitude**

My attitude toward the village people has undergone change. During the first stage of my research in Kanuba and during the years following my return from the United States, I was strictly committed to the role of an academic-oriented researcher. Recently, I have been revising both my research approach and personal stance. While I have gained professionally from my research in Kanuba and other Nubian villages, I often wonder whether the Nubians have benefited from my studies. Impressed by the progress that Kanuba achieved during the past decade and embarrassed by the Kanubans' unhappiness with my neutral role as a strict researcher, I have become consciously sympathetic to their aspirations and more willing to help them whenever possible. Recently, I tried to advocate before the relevant officials the village's request to receive International Food Aid and UNESCO vocational facilities to which New Nubian villages have had access. I do not know what the impact of such a new role will be on my future research in Kanuba.

Another important change in my attitude is connected with publication. While in the beginning I regarded publication as basically an academic activity, I have recently come to the conclusion that the people under study must have access to the researcher's writings. It is true that people's desire to know what is written about them may vary but it seems only moral on the part of anthropologists to make their findings available to the studied people especially if they plan to subject them to a longitudinal research. From the Kanuba study, several articles have appeared in professional journals in English but none have been translated into Arabic. Only one article on the cooperative farm written for EOLCD was passed on to the village in Arabic.

To address this publication issue (which I have found to be a serious problem in regard to my ongoing Nubian research), I began presenting a series of short articles on my research findings in both Kanuba and New Nubia in *Nubia's News*, a bimonthly magazine first issued in February 1975 by the Nubian Club in Cairo. They aim to provide basic information on the communities studied and to introduce readers to the notion of research

and its significance to the new life of the Kom Ombo Nubians and its related problems. Writing these was a difficult task, especially in terms of deciding what topics to write about and how to handle them.

In addition, I approached the publication problem on two other fronts. To my institution, I pointed out the negative implications of a research policy that mainly emphasizes academic publications in a foreign language. The policy affected both the people under study and the administrators involved in a directed change scheme. In my case, local officials and administrators often had inquiries about my institution's interests in research among Nubians; they had some concern about the lack of Arabic publications. I also explained to the officials at EOLCD that the research findings presented in my reports should be communicated (perhaps in a rather simple and brief form) to the administrators and technicians involved in the technical development schemes. In my opinion, it is useful for them to learn about the recipient groups and to know what an objective outsider feels the problems in their administrative structure are. Moreover, their curiosity about the ongoing long-term research is satisfied.

### **Long-Term Research in the Villagers' View**

In a discussion of the question of long-term research in Kanuba with a group of five informants holding leading positions in the community, some interesting views emerged. The informants tended to view a long-term study in their community as a reflection of a continuing interest on the part of the researcher in the village and its people. That was something they enjoyed and appreciated. One informant said, "You [referring to Kennedy's group] were the first people to show interest in our lifestyle and to live with us. Many individuals and groups dropped in for a Hello-Goodbye type of research. You [referring to me] are the only person who revisits us from time to time." The village leader commented, while showing me the village's twelve-year-old autograph book, "Most of the statements written here are complimentary but yours are not; we feel that your sentiments are true." He added, "We suspected your role in the beginning but over these long years, the village cannot view you other than as a true good friend."

An interesting point made by one informant was that he viewed the research as documentation of the social history of the village that, if made available in a language comprehensible to villagers, could be taught to the younger generation. This may be one positive contribution that longitudinal research can make to the community under study. Two further points were made. A long-term researcher is capable of understanding the village's needs

and problems in their sociocultural and historical context. In addition, it was remarked, the village can afford to trust and have control over only one researcher in residence at a time given the absence of a large proportion of men from the village most of the day.

Kanuba, due to its orientation toward progress and the achievements it has accomplished, has recently become a place for top officials and foreign experts to visit. Several government agencies conducted uncoordinated surveys and studies in the village in the five years between 1970 and 1975, with villagers being subjected to many similar questionnaires in a relatively short time. When I attempted to explore further development on specific issues during my last visit, I was often told that the same questions had been asked by such-and-such a person or agency.

Like Kanuba, I suspect that other communities subjected to longitudinal study change during the course of the study in terms of their relative isolation. After a period of observation, they attract attention and become open to a wider spectrum of interaction with the larger society, partly because they are known. This effect must be taken into account by those planning long-term research in such communities. The question is how to work out a flexible research strategy that allows the study to adapt to the changing conditions of the community.

### **Long-Term Research Strategy**

An initial community study in its common anthropological sense is basic, I believe, to longitudinal research. It serves as a guide and as a base for further field research. The Kanuba community study of 1964 proved to be a very useful reference during subsequent visits. In less than a month in 1972, I was able to collect data and to draft a report on the village cooperative farm at an urgent and last-minute request from EOLCD. Producing such a report in a satisfactory way would have been impossible without this reference. My continuing rapport with the village and my familiarity with its developments are also major advantages.

In my own research, I have found the problem-oriented approach to be a useful and convenient strategy to use after the original baseline study. The problems focused on can be either follow-ups of earlier interests or new concerns. In regard to research priorities, I believe that there is no need to list problems that lend themselves to long-term research. In dynamic settings, such as Kanuba, research topics significant to the development of anthropological knowledge are easily identified. The choice of research problems must depend on the resources of the project and the interests of its sponsors.

One factor affecting the strategy will be the degree to which the researchers have students or colleagues associated with them. I have not had the opportunity to have students visit or conduct research in Kanuba; but, in March 1975, I had the chance to invite Arthur Wycoff, a social psychologist from AUC, to visit Kanuba. Wycoff came to New Nubia for a week to explore research possibilities. When the Land Reclamation Regional Office arranged his visit, I suggested that a one-day visit to Kanuba be included. Wycoff's observations while he was in the village and his inquiries and comments proved most useful to my own study. A new input to the field situation should be viewed as a healthy approach for long-term studies. It adds new insights and so reduces the likelihood of diminishing returns. The new researcher also is less likely to ignore significant data because of a familiarity with the place and people under study.

The personal aging process is another relevant factor influencing the methodology of long-term research. In Kanuba, I noticed that my association with people has often been with the age group with whom I mixed during the 1964 study. I now am viewed and sometimes treated in a parental perspective. During my recent visit, some friends were concerned with the gray hair that has begun to show on my head. They were surprised, but admiring, that my son would enter the university in 1976 and that my two daughters were no longer 'little kids' as they had been a few years before. Their attitude toward me as a parent gave me the chance to talk with the women. During a recent visit (winter 1975), I was invited by my previous informants and other young men, who were children when I was first in the village, to stop by and greet their wives and children. In 1964, this was never possible.

On the other hand, when I tried to approach teenagers to explore ideas for possible future studies on the youth in Kanuba and other Nubian villages, some informants seemed unwilling to accept the idea that I conduct research among this age group. When I asked why, one informant said, "Your status, role, and age lend themselves to a more serious task."

### **Relationship to Informants**

No informants have been paid in cash for their collaboration, either in Kennedy's study or since. Gifts to the village, such as nominal cash donations given toward the construction of the village mosque, and small cash donations to individuals have been our form of remuneration. On different occasions during our stay in the village, candy was given to children and bottled fruit juice to the men, a tradition I have continued on subsequent visits. Toward the end of our stay, Kennedy's group invited all the men in the village to eat *fatta*,

a favorite dish connected with ceremonial celebrations. I should also note that I have always taken a special family gift to the village leader. The reason for this special gift is that over the past years he has been related to me as a friend much more than as the village leader or as a dependable informant.

During Kennedy's study, I associated with the village leader mostly when I was involved in long interviews with him about his life history. In the summer of 1964, following the completion of fieldwork in Kanuba, Kennedy invited the leader to come to Cairo for a visit and more interviews. During his stay, he was introduced to my family. He travelled with us to Alexandria. His sense of humor and his kindness to my children made his company pleasant to my family who had never been so close to a Nubian. While in Cairo and Alexandria, the leader and I sat together and talked for hours. We also visited several places where he was brought up and worked before returning to Kanuba. We enjoyed each other and he shared with me so much of his personal life that he once said to me, "I do not know how much is left that you do not know about me." My relationship with other informants is generally good. Yet there are some with whom I feel more at ease and share a more intimate relationship.

Over the past years my informants have continued to be the same except for those who have left the village or died. I have been unable to establish strong rapport with new informants, especially with newcomers to the villages. This is most probably due to my residence outside the village in the city of Aswan and to the fact that my recent visits have been short. However, it is interesting that I developed a friendly relationship with the only son of the village headman. His father was a very good friend to me during the period of Kennedy's study and continued to be so until he died in 1969. During the first period, his son was completely indifferent to the research group. Since 1970, he has visited me quite often in Cairo as well as in Aswan where he now works.

I would like to suggest that an anthropologist involved in long-term research should widen the circle of his informants over the years. He should be able to draw on more varied groups. This serves to replace informants lost by relocation or death. Dealing with informants of different age groups also exposes the anthropologist to differing perspectives that provide him with a more comprehensive view of village life. Perhaps more important, long-term informants, having experienced a close relationship to the researcher and understanding his interests, may tend to answer him as they perceive that he wishes to be answered. A long-term informant may also conceal facts or twist information so as not to embarrass himself or others. He may not wish to jeopardize his relationship with the researcher.

### **Naming the Research Site**

Anthropologists often conceal the true name of their research site under a pseudonym. In Kennedy's publications, the village studied was referred to as "Kanuba." I continued the use of this name in my own writings. It could be shocking and disappointing for the villagers, I suspect, if they read about their conflicts over ritual performances when they persistently tried to show us that these differences were minor and of no effect on the village life. It would hurt their feelings and might cause them to doubt all other writings. But, the question here is whether the researcher should maintain the pseudonym of a community subject to long-term research or use its real name. In my case, I use "Kanuba" in my academic papers published in English, while in my Arabic reports I use the village's true name. These reports usually present data combined with very little or no theoretical discussion. Writing these reports, however, is not an easy task.

If I were to begin a new longitudinal study in another community, I would use the actual name of the community in all my writings, because I would wish the people under study to share my perceptions and analysis of their lifestyle. Their feedback could be an important contribution to the study. Giving pseudonyms to anthropological research sites (while a useful precaution) also may hinder communication of research findings to colleagues, students, administrators, or to others who are undertaking research or are on action-assignments in these places. I once was asked by a government agency to send publications on the Nubian village where I did field research. When I explained that I had already sent copies a long time ago, I was told that the publications I had sent concerned a different village, namely "Kanuba."

### **The Micro and Macro Levels**

Kanuba has always been my micro research unit whereas New Nubia at large represents the macro level of my research. While field research in Kanuba has been basically anthropological in orientation and practice, my studies in other Nubian villages have mostly been of the survey type designed to collect quantitative data. The latter method is more acceptable to government agencies.

This survey-type research in New Nubia over a long period of time gave me, as I have lately discovered, only casual contact with the numerous new villages. I was deprived of the thorough investigation and close observations that characterized my research in Kanuba. At the intensive level, I usually felt more relaxed and almost 'at home.' This feeling may perhaps be attributed to the continuing solid rapport with the village people and my familiarity

with the place. The value of this rapport may not be recognized and appreciated until one tries to establish it anew. In general, I feel a deficiency in my anthropological training in regard to the study of what Bernard and Peltó (1972:4) refer to as macro-technological change. Anthropologists have approached this field only recently and to a modest extent. Problems related to large-scale environmental transformation such as community relocation schemes, whether caused by dams or new towns, have not as yet been well explored. Anthropological research related to macro-technological change needs, in my view, a new perspective and training, as these projects are usually regional and national in scope while anthropological emphasis has been on the micro level.

### **Research Findings**

During my follow-up research in Kanuba I continued my original interest in religious practices, although later I gave more emphasis to the investigation of the village farm and its impact on social and economic life. In the winter of 1975 I gathered preliminary data on the socialization of the youth and data on the transmission of the villagers' notion of what progress is and how it is to be achieved. I discovered during that recent field trip that monitoring Kanuba over the past years has raised questions relevant to the study of culture change and adaptation processes in New Nubia.

### **The Community Religious Life**

During the 1964 study the village religious system was characterized by a split over the doctrinal legitimacy of popular religious beliefs and practices (Fahim 1973; Kennedy and Fahim 1974). A strong Orthodox group condemned the majority's practice of ceremonial celebration that traditionally had been community-wide events and were viewed generally by villagers as occasions for social gathering and entertainment. This village conflict was still evident in 1969, but during my visit to Kanuba in 1975 I gathered that the village no longer is in conflict over these matters. Preoccupied with farm activities and responsibilities in the farm management, the people seem less interested in the old controversial issues. The Orthodox group leader is now in charge of the animal husbandry section of the farm business. The people favoring ceremonial gatherings have found that "the farm business is much more beneficial than arguments over Islamic legitimacy of ceremonial practices," the village leader told me.

The question that may arise now is whether or not better economic conditions, due to the success of the village farm, will revitalize traditional Nubian

ceremonialism. During the years of economic hardship, the villagers tended to maintain traditional ceremonial activities but simplified their forms, reduced their frequency, and minimized their costs. New Nubia's settlers similarly cut short their ceremonial celebration due to the rise in the cost of living after resettlement. I propose to follow up this question, which deals with the relationship between economy and religious life.

### **The Village Leadership**

An interesting aspect of the village leadership is the continued role of the core leading group of 1964 through various changes in strategy. In 1964, the leader's overall strategy was based on an attempt to secure advantages for the community by impressing important government and other public personages with the needs of the village. After achieving this end and satisfying most of the village's needs, he found himself facing the many new problems created by the distribution of the new houses and the management of the cooperative farm. The leader then was required to direct his attention to internal village problems while forming a "second line" to take over his original leading role in "external affairs and problems," to use his own words.

In dealing with internal conflicts and problems associated with social and economic developments in the village, the leader reinforced the community's spirit and succeeded in assigning participatory roles to individuals and groups. He recently told me, "progress is not all honey," while reflecting on the immense problems that progress has brought and his efforts to counter them through a smooth policy and unrushed decisions. The leader's new role has changed his character; while he is in his late forties, he acts like an elderly man. He has grown a beard, a sign of old age and piety in the villager's view. In 1964, he was addressed as *afandi*, a title for government clerks, whereas today, he is widely known as *al-shaykh*, a title given to pious leaders.

A dynamic and achievement-oriented leadership in a community accelerates the pace of change and promotes stability. The continuation of a participatory leadership pattern in a rapidly changing community for over a decade is, I believe, a phenomenon that should be thoroughly studied to increase our knowledge of the internal factors that promote change at the local level. How long will the existing leadership pattern last? Under what circumstances will it disappear or be totally modified? What will it be like when the "second line" of young men takes over and how will this affect the village notion and practice of progress? These are some questions that are raised and can only be answered through longitudinal study.

## Kanuba and New Nubia

My frequent visits to Kanuba while conducting research in New Nubia have often stimulated comparative propositions. A basic question is: Why is Kanuba a stable and progressive community whereas most Kom Ombo Nubian villages are not? Is the time factor essential for adaptation and progress as many administrators and some Nubian leaders think? Are there other factors that lend themselves to explain this situation?

My field notes over the past years show that while the villagers of Kanuba tend to be mostly future-oriented, the Kom Ombo settlers, even more than ten years after their resettlement, tend to be past-oriented. Settlers in New Nubia talk frequently about the “good old days”; they reject their present realities and hope for very little in the future. This feeling was projected and dramatized in February 1975 when the government announced plans to develop the shores of Lake Aswan and to settle new communities there. The issue of returning to the original homeland was debated among Nubians and, although there were opposing views, the fact remains that many people would be willing to return to Old Nubia.

During my visit of March 1975 to some New Nubian villages, I heard many complaints because the youth are rejecting the cultural involution adopted by the Nubian community as an adaptive mechanism to relocation (see Scudder 1973). Dependency on the government, the ongoing conflict between the old and new, and the increasing gap between the elderly and the young have resulted in a status quo situation in some villages and maintained a state of dissatisfaction and stress.

In Kanuba, this sort of cultural conflict and a generation gap do exist but to a much lesser degree. One explanation lies in the success of the village leadership in building an *esprit de corps* among the people and encouraging an outward competition—the villagers minimize the effect of their cultural differences by directing their attention to competition with other villages to secure some of the limited aid available. The Kanuba case suggests that an emphasis on participatory leadership, as a way of developing community solidarity, should be recommended policy for community developers who must cope with the stress situations often associated with community relocation schemes.

The contrasts between Kanuba and the New Nubian villages should help to pinpoint indices to be used in identifying the termination of (or the continuation of) the transitional period that follows mass population movements.

## **On Recent Developments in Kanuba**

During my last visit to Kanuba, I was struck by both the new projects the village has undertaken during the last decade and the change in people's interests. The youth talk about traveling abroad to seek better job opportunities. A forty-five-year-old schoolteacher left his family in the village for a four-year contract in Saudi Arabia; others wish to do so. Girls move more freely in and out of the village. Contacts with New Nubian villages have increased; consequently the often-closed marriage circle is opening up. Even contacts with non-Nubians, whose help is needed in agriculture, have widened. I was informed of a Nubian girl who recently married a non-Nubian, an incident that would have been resented strongly by the community just a few years ago.

Women in particular are experiencing an entirely new life with the agricultural work, recently introduced products, potable water, and electricity. As a result of these innovations, women are more involved in social and political events within the village. The village organization for community development depends basically on the participation of the women (especially the younger generation) in promoting programs relating to the nursery and to the handcrafts industry.

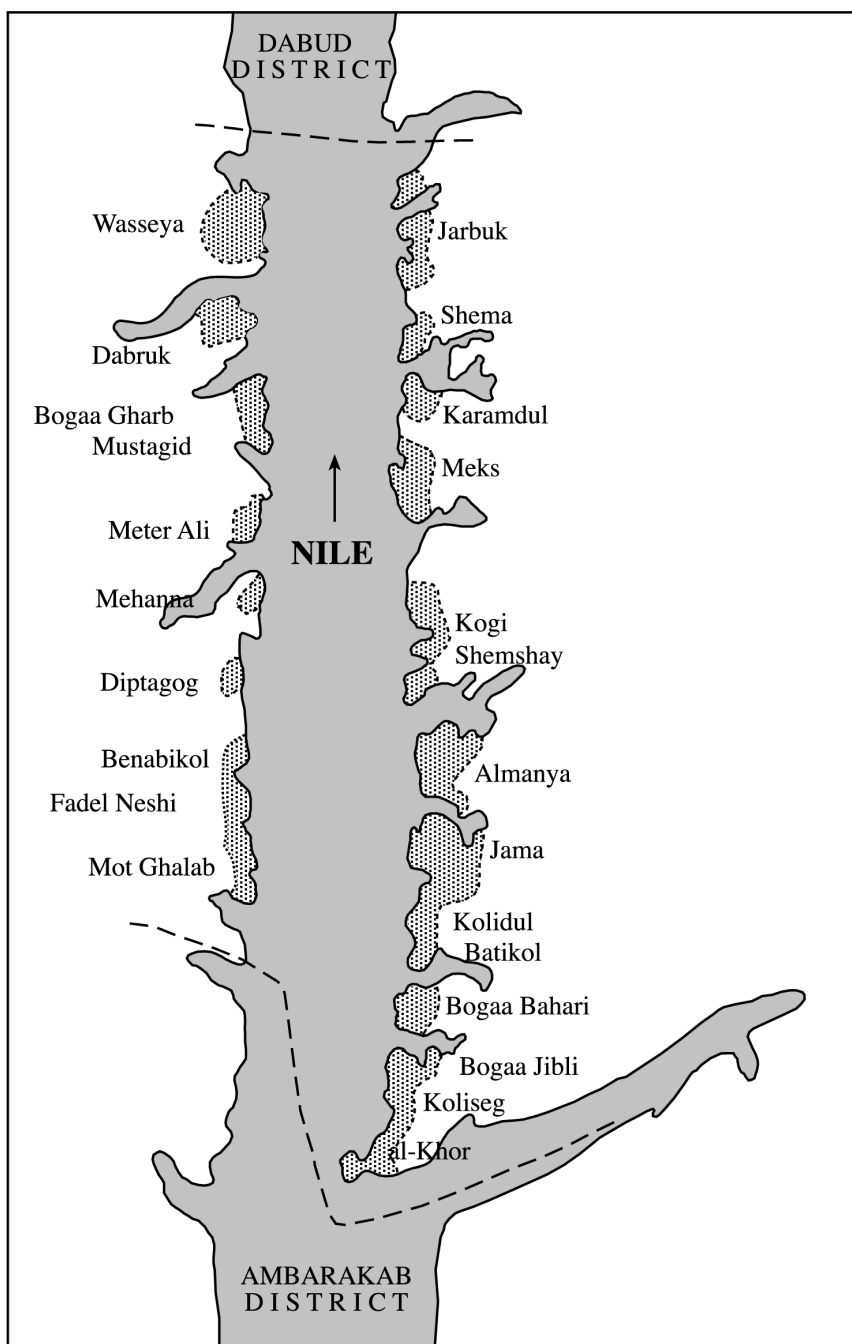
## **Conclusion**

In concluding this article, I wish to indicate that from the beginning my research in Kanuba has been an experience that I treasure and hope to continue. In Kanuba, I have had the opportunity to practice anthropology, which previously I had only read about. In Kanuba, too, I have gone through a wonderful experience, although uneasy at times, of learning about and from other people. I recall with gratitude both the professional gains and the new personality traits I have acquired, such as tolerance, patience, contentment, and hope. More importantly, I believe, I have acquired some wisdom of the folk people.

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Map 3: Dahmit district in 1963. Based on a map in the Callender papers, National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC. The stippled areas indicate the village settlements in the district. The team headquarters was in Jama. The distance from al-Khor to Jarbuk was approximately 7km.

## The Kenuz

Charles Callender and Fadwa el Guindi\*

Before the residents of Egyptian Nubia were resettled at Kom Ombo in 1963–64, the Kenuz homeland lay in the northern part of this region, extending south along the Nile from the neighborhood of Aswan to the district of al-Madiq. Even before their relocation, however, most of the Kenuz had settled in Egyptian cities, where they retained their ethnic identity and much of their culture.

The history of this people is complex, and known only in part. Kenuz culture, a blend of Arab and Nubian features, emerged during the ninth and tenth centuries AD. The Arab tribes which began moving into Egypt after the Muslim conquest lost their privileged status after 'Abbasid rule was established in the eighth century. Some of them drifted south into Upper Egypt and the adjoining desert, where the government had little control. Those who settled in the vicinity of Aswan merged with their Nubian predecessors to form the people to whom the name Kenuz has been applied, in various forms, since about AD 1000. Although most Kenuz are now bilingual, their native language is Nubian, almost identical with Dongolawi in the Sudan, and closely related to the Mahas-Fadija speech along the intervening stretches of the Nile. Their social organization is still based in concept, and largely in practice, on a

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\*An earlier version of this article appeared in *Life-Crisis Rituals Among the Kenuz* (Cleveland: Press of the Case Western Reserve University, 1971), 3–9.

Bedouin-like tribal structure that shows very few traces of the matrilineal system characterizing Nubia before the Arab invasion. Kenuz religion, clearly Muslim, still includes some direct links with the pre-Arab past in spite of extensive reforms that were carried out in this century to remove practices regarded as non-Islamic.

The very limited resources of the Kenuz area, which even in the best circumstances could not support a dense population, have traditionally forced many of its people into activities taking them outside its boundaries. This factor probably stimulated Kenuz participation in campaigns against the kingdom of Dongola during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Its later manifestations have been less militant. Riverine trade was formerly important, but after 1901 the Aswan Dam curtailed its northern range and by the middle of this century it had dwindled to much smaller dimensions. Colonies in Upper Egypt, initially established by traders but eventually attracting settlers who purchased land, drew off some of the surplus population.

Labor migration eventually became the dominant economic strategy, replacing almost all other techniques. Several centuries ago Kenuz men began working in the cities of Lower Egypt, staying several years before they returned to Nubia with their savings. This practice has shifted through several phases reflecting developments in Egypt as well as deteriorating conditions within Nubia. Each phase enlarged the scale of migration and lengthened the time individual migrants spent in Egypt. By the eighteenth century, the migrants were engaged in their characteristic urban occupation of household servants. Later they specialized in working for the foreigners who moved into Egypt in growing numbers. Railroad service between Lower Egypt and Aswan, and its extension through Egyptian Nubia in the form of steamers operated by Sudan Railways, facilitated travel for migrants and provided a postal system through which they retained close communication with their families in Nubia and could send them regular cash remittances.

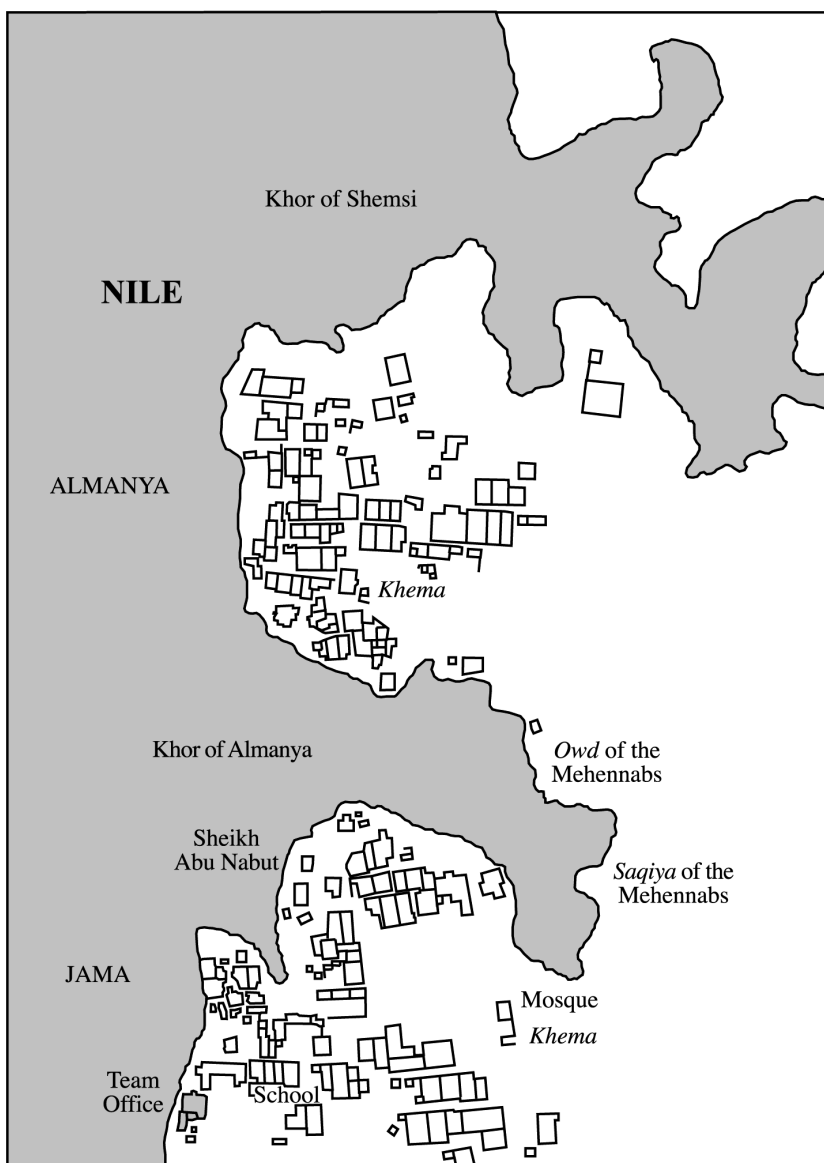
Construction of the Aswan Dam in 1902, and its later elevations in 1913 and 1933, crippled the Kenuz agricultural system and accelerated migration, eventually drawing almost all males into urban occupations. In the early years of this century men and older boys circulated between Nubia and the cities, while women and younger children remained behind to farm and raise livestock. The catastrophic effects of the 1933 elevation upon agriculture ended the economic advantages of dividing families in this way, thus drawing the component that had stayed in Nubia into the system of migration. Women began circulating between their native villages and the urban communities,

while men tended to stay in the cities throughout their active working life. By mid-century the pattern had shifted again, toward a system of permanent emigration. Most of the Kenuz left Nubia to settle in Egyptian cities, leaving only a minority of perhaps 20 percent in their homeland.

The district of Dahmit, on which this monograph is based, was a narrow stretch of the Nile Valley between five and seven kilometers in length, flanked by desert, and lying in the northern part of the Kenuz area. At the time of our study it had 1,055 residents, who represented a total population of at least 5,415. Almost all of this group were Kenuz. The schools and post office employed a handful of Egyptians and Fadija who usually stayed outside active participation in the local community. The only outsiders present in significant numbers were 'Ababda. Arabized Beja who emerged as a distinct people about the same time as the Kenuz and under rather similar circumstances, the Ababda were formerly nomads living in the Eastern Desert, where many of them remain. For several generations some of them had been settling along the Nile, in Upper Egypt as well as in Nubia. Those living in Dahmit had extensively intermarried with the Kenuz and were almost entirely assimilated into their culture.

The population resident in Dahmit showed unusual demographic features. Twenty-five percent were under ten years old, and 40 percent under twenty. Three-quarters of the residents were female, with 52 percent of the adult women either widows or divorcées. Adult males—a status we rather arbitrarily assigned to any man over twenty—numbered only 105, 10 percent of the population. The physical or mental handicaps that kept some of these men from migrating or had forced them to return from the cities prevented their taking active roles in the community. The activity of other men who had retired to their native villages as elderly migrants was often restricted by age. Still others were not Kenuz, and thus peripheral. As far as the organization of society in Dahmit depended on its male residents, it rested on a very small group, at most on eighty-three men, or 8 percent of the population. The residents of the district were overwhelmingly dependent on migrant relatives for economic support. Nevertheless, Dahmit was a well-integrated and efficiently functioning society, generally untouched by the kind of disintegration these circumstances might produce. Its residents maintained their culture at a rather high level of intensity.

The Kenuz of Dahmit were organized by two systems: residence, manifesting itself in such units as households and villages; and descent, involving patrilineal lineages and tribes. The latter system was much more significant.



Map 4: Settlement pattern in two Dahmit villages, Almanyā and Jāmā, in 1963. Based on a map in the Callender papers, National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC. The team office is shown in Jāmā. Public buildings include a mosque, a school, a shrine (Sheikh Abu Nabut) and two *khemas* (guesthouses). The *owd* and *saqiya* are water-lifting devices, here belonging to the Mehennab tribe.

## Residence

The core of a Kenuz house included three features. One of these was a pair of rooms, set side-by-side, one serving as a bedroom and the other used for cooking. Their walls were built of stone and sun-dried brick, plastered with Nile mud, and roofed either with palm-trunk rafters covered with mats or, if wood was not available, with brick barrel vaults. The second unit was a level area, cleared of pebbles and functioning as a courtyard, whether or not it was walled. The third was a place for receiving visitors, in earlier times, specifically males, although this distinction had become blurred. At its simplest, this was a *mastaba*, a small platform raised a foot or two off the ground. In its more complex forms, it became a room or building designed for this purpose, called a *mandara*, if completely enclosed, or a *sbera*, if one end was open. To these minimal features, most houses added extra bedrooms as well as stables and various storerooms, producing a large complex of buildings set on opposite sides of a large walled courtyard. Houses built after the elevation of 1933—when their size was no longer restricted by agricultural needs, and the compensation paid for buildings destroyed by this event introduced large amounts of cash into the Dahmit economy—were often large, architecturally spectacular, and elaborately decorated. Exterior decoration concentrated on the façades of buildings and courtyard walls, which were embellished with clay moldings and fretwork, and often whitewashed, with colored painting sometimes applied over this. Plates, saucers, and tiles were set in patterns over the doorways. The rear walls, not intended for public view, were usually simply unplastered stone or brick.

In spite of its size and imposing appearance, such a house-complex was traditionally inhabited by a nuclear family. It might also house dependent relatives, usually elderly women, but almost never held two couples, except temporarily. Marriage was followed by a period of matrilocal residence sometimes lasting a year or longer, although the son-in-law—if a migrant—was present for only the early part of this time. At the end of this period the younger couple usually left. If they remained, the complex was formally divided into two houses by a wall bisecting the courtyard. A similar division was required if they moved to live with the husband's parents. Most couples released from matrilocality built their own houses. By the time of our study, 52 percent of the houses in Dahmit were vacant. Almost half of those occupied held only one person, usually a woman. The rest mostly contained incomplete and fragmentary families, even when their residents extended over three generations. Only twenty households out of

a total of 464 consisted of complete families that included a couple and all the children of their marriage. Extended families—never complete—were either based on a sibling combination or more often included a grandparent–grandchild range, with the middle generation sometimes missing.

Except for saints' shrines, which were traditionally attached to cemeteries and placed slightly apart from settlements, all buildings in Dahmit were grouped into fairly compact hamlets or villages. By 1963, after a series of moves from earlier locations nearer the Nile, these villages were strung out along the cliffs and hills forming the rim of the valley. When the reservoir emptied in summer, they overlooked the floodplain, where their residents planted fields of millet, *kasbrangeg*, and melons that could seldom be harvested before the water rose again. In winter, the Nile became a lake. As water filled the valley and backed up into the *khors*—dry watercourses cutting through the rim at right angles to the river—village sites became peninsulas, lined with small irrigated gardens. The twenty-four villages of Dahmit were small settlements, ranging in number of houses from eight to 121, and in residents from eight to 138.

As a social unit, a village lacked formal structure. Its residents were informally organized through propinquity and bilateral kinship ties that carried important, but informal, reciprocal obligations. These were particularly strong among women. Tribal affairs generally absorbed the interests of men, who were much less concerned with their residential communities. The women of a small village were loosely organized as a group, often with a recognized leader, meeting in the evening for social purposes and occasionally working together when a large force was needed. Larger villages included several of these groups, coinciding with the neighborhoods into which such communities were divided by topographic features or vacant houses.

While most corporate institutions among the Kenuz were conceptually associated with lineages or tribes, a village had one formal corporate feature: its *khema*. A typical *khema* included a *mandara*-like room that was formerly used for housing male guests but more recently served as a storeroom. Facing this, and separated from it by a walled court, was an open gallery shaded by a roof supported by brick pillars. *Khemas* traditionally provided quarters for guests and for entertaining, but had other important functions, including their use for group prayer when a mosque was not available, and for informal gatherings of men. The larger size of the houses built after 1933, which contained ample room for receiving and housing guests, combined with depopulation and the withdrawal of men to erode most of the *khemas*' functions. Only one—its use by men for funeral condolences—persisted with little change.

## Descent

Social integration within Dahmit was based upon the tribal system. This also provided the links between the resident population and the much larger migrant component upon which it was economically and socially dependent. The people of Dahmit were divided among twelve tribes. A Kenuz tribe is a rather small system of segmentary patrilineal lineages, formally structured after a Bedouin-like model, and usually including three orders of segments. The tribe itself, or maximal lineage, is divided among major lineages, which in turn consist of minor lineages. Its members, conceptually a patrilineal descent group and thus sharing important obligations defined in terms of kinship, are further bound by a system of endogamous marriage. Kenuz ideology formally defines this as preferential patrilineal parallel-cousin marriage. In practice the system involves a strong preference for unions within the tribe but—for the most part—outside the minor lineage. Marriage into other tribes of the same district is also accepted, but very strong barriers inhibit unions with outsiders, especially those without tribal organization.

A tribe is also integrated by its corporate estate. Before relocation, such an estate was divided between its older forms in Dahmit and new forms that migrants had established in the urban communities through various kinds of compulsory or voluntary associations based on segmentary and tribal affiliation. The economic aspects of tribal estates in Dahmit, once consisting of land and water rights in irrigation developments owned by tribes or by smaller segments, later shifted to trade, and emphasized its organization through tribes rather than joint ownership of commercial institutions—although this last feature did sometimes appear. The most important institutions were shops distributing *tamwin* supplies: sugar, oil, flour, and fuel provided by the national government for sale at prices below their market value. Such a shop might be owned by a tribe. More often, it belonged to an entrepreneur. In either case, the shop was closely tied to a particular tribe or, rarely, to a lineage, and members of this descent group formed its clientele.

Corporate estates also had ritual aspects. A tribe was itself a ritual association, sometimes owning a mosque in Dahmit, and always constituting a cult centering on a saint who was defined in some sense as ancestral to its members. The annual cult celebration was the most important expression of tribal ritual. It involved corporate action by the entire tribe, both men and women, assembling all members who lived in Dahmit and often drawing back numbers of migrants. Besides returning for these celebrations, migrants often asked aid of a tribal saint, vowing gifts to the cult if their requests were granted and fulfilling these through relatives living in Dahmit.

Ultimately they also financed the celebrations both indirectly, through cash assistance to relatives, and directly, through larger sums of money formally donated by urban associations.

In addition to the segmentary structure itself, and joint interest in the corporate estates attached to this, each tribe was also organized as a political and administrative unit, autonomous as far as local governments permitted. A tribe usually consisted of several such units, one corresponding to its residents in Dahmit and the others formed by each large migrant community. Beyond the kinship and marital ties linking these units and the institutions providing communication among them, their main unifying bond was mutual concern with Dahmit. The Dahmit component, economically supported by its migrants and sometimes dependent on them for leadership, had much less autonomy.

The political organization of any tribal section was provided by the segmentary lineage system, through corporate action and complementary opposition expressed and implemented by lineage-heads. In concept, every segment within each territorial unit had a head, whose authority was limited to contexts involving action with other segments of the same order, or relations with its members in other communities. Since political activity necessarily involved relations among segments, a segment could take action only through its head. The very small number of men living in Dahmit carried obvious threats for tribal organization and required extensive readjustment. As one consequence, effective leadership was limited to the men heading major lineages, one of whom was also recognized as head of his tribe in Nubia, but without any authority over its migrant members. Major-lineage heads in Dahmit also acted as trustees for any minor lineages within their segments that lacked resident men, and sometimes extended this function across tribal boundaries to service other descent groups. These adjustments enabled segmentary organization to continue under very unfavorable circumstances, and ensured the maintenance of ties with migrants.

The use of tribal structure and ideology for the organization of people and activities was so pervasive among the Kenuz that most aspects of their social organization may be described within this framework (Callender 1966; 1970). Yet the segmentary systems in Dahmit, although organized, administered, and directed by men—who monopolized political activities and offices—were composed mostly of women, whose orientation was in some respects very different. Left to themselves, Kenuz women tended to cluster into local groups that were integrated through common residence and bilateral kinship ties, which concerned them much more than tribal

affiliation and groups defined by patrilineal descent. Many activities carried on by women were inevitably governed, at least in part, by their segmentary affiliation or that of their husbands. This feature regulated much economic activity, ranging from agricultural rights to purchasing basic household supplies from the tribal shop. Most cash assistance from migrants came through lineage and tribal heads. Women also fell under the legal jurisdiction of these men. Even the marriage system, giving women much latitude in arranging unions, ultimately had to conform to the endogamous preferences attached to tribes. Most ritual acts performed by women were also tribally organized, although here exceptions were very common, even if limited to certain spheres.

The Kenuz, exposed to Islam for over a thousand years, have probably been Muslim, at least formally, since their emergence as a distinct people. Since 1900, their religion has been subject to growing pressure to expunge non-Islamic elements. Yet its total range still embraced a spectrum that ranged from formal Islamic institutions through various forms of popular Islam to such specifically non-Muslim activities as ritual centering on the Nile or its spirit-inhabitants. Formal Islam, organized through mosques and congregations, was closely integrated with the tribal system. Mosques were typically owned by tribes, whose men provided their congregations. Women were generally excluded from the public activities that centered on this aspect of religion, although a mosque could acquire certain shrinelike features that attracted marginal activity by women. Their participation in popular Islam was greater. The Mirghaniya *tariqa*, a Sufi order introduced from the Sudan in the last century and at one time very important in Dahmit, had lost much of its vitality, but remained active in neighboring districts. Only men were members; but women provided the audience for its celebrations, helped finance these, and drew certain benefits from them. The most important manifestation of popular Islam were the saint cults, whose significance and proliferation seem characteristic of Kenuz, in spite of many similarities with Egyptian and Sudanese practice.

Saint cults existed at many levels. Many were ephemeral, their members comprising only a handful of women or schoolboys, and dying out after a few years. Stable cults that received widespread recognition belonged to tribes or, very rarely, to major lineages. As noted earlier, these organizations formed an important aspect of the corporate estates attached to descent groups. A tribal cult typically had two officials: a male *naqib* who organized its annual *mulid*, or celebration, and a female *naqiba* who acted as custodian for its shrine. Women made requests of saints, usually centering on a few categories

such as health, marriage, conception, delivery, and relations with migrant relatives. When asking aid, a woman promised the saint a gift if her request was granted. Such gifts, or *nadr*, were given to the cult during its *mulid*, usually held around the middle of the Islamic month of Sha‘ban. In the distant past, this system had also involved men; but the *nadr*-centered aspect of saint cults, like most actions involving their shrines, was eventually confined to women. Other features of these cults continued to engage men, who organized and took part in the celebrations, besides dividing the gifts received during these events. Male participation, in fact, helped distinguish real saint cults from the unstable and temporary phenomena that imitated them.

The ritual activity carried on by women included two important subsystems to which men were, with some exceptions, traditionally peripheral. One involved Nile spirits; the other, life crises. The marginal participation of men tended to keep both kinds of ritual outside tribal control and eventually protected them from reform by ensuring their definition as non-Islamic but not really religious, and thus harmless.

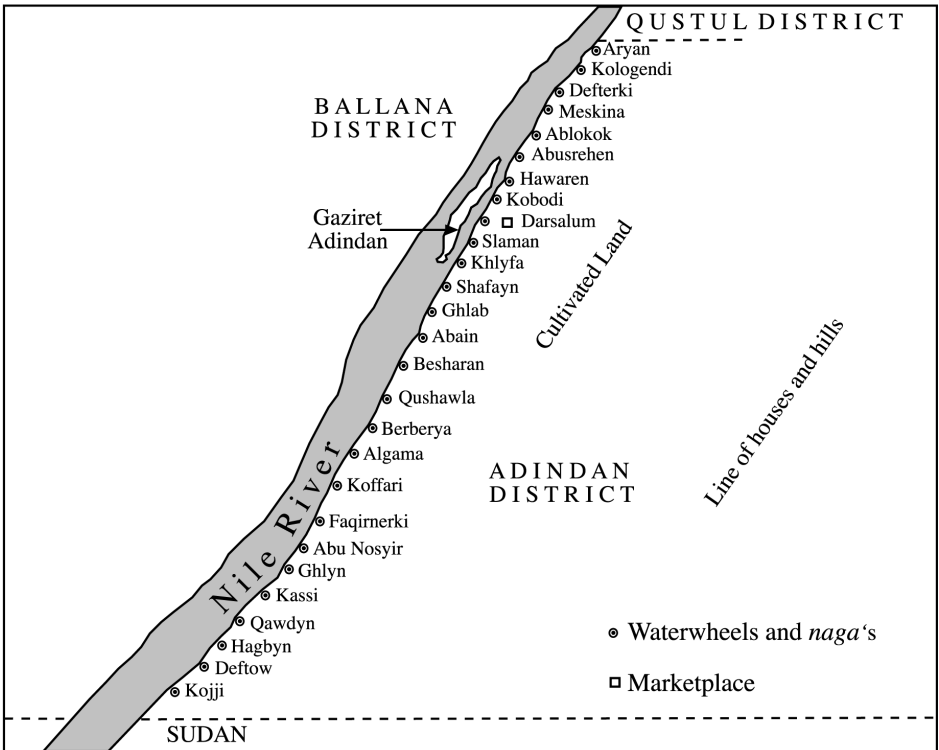
Ritual centering on the Nile and on the spirits inhabiting the river—these foci are often hard to separate—was limited almost entirely to women. So was the closely related *zar* cult, carried on by mediums who were possessed by river spirits. The spirits living in the Nile, usually called by the Kenuz term *dogri*, were also known by several Arabic forms: *banat al-salibin* (daughters of the virtuous or pious); *nas al-babr* (people of the river); and occasionally, *malaika* (angels). Like the people of Dahmit, most of them were female. Apparently male *dogri* were always invisible. The females could, under certain circumstances, assume a form that was human in most respects. The functions of the *dogri* differed according to their sex. Males took possession of certain women, who thus became mediums. The females were the object of a cult, carried on by women, whose general features paralleled those of saint cults, but without male participation or tribal significance. It was thus loosely organized, lacking shrines or *mulids*, although the Kenuz had reinterpreted the Muslim holy day of ‘Ashura into a celebration for the *dogri*, corresponding to the role of Nuss Sha‘ban in saint cults. Women appealed to the *dogri* as to saints, and for many of the same kinds of help, except that their powers seemed limited to the reproductive cycle and life-crisis ritual. They also received *nadr* as payment for their intercession. Both authors have described the *dogri* cult in detail in other publications (Callender 1970; el Guindi 1966).

The second subsystem consisted of actions used to protect persons from the various dangers to which they became vulnerable during life-crises. These

actions were rather closely allied to Nile-centered ritual, although they were also linked to saints extended into the realm of formal Islam. Except for this latter aspect, which involved direct action by men, these rituals were guided and for the most part carried out by women. Like Nile ritual, this subsystem is an area of Kenuz culture where the survival of specifically Nubian pre-Arab traits was particularly visible.

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Map 5: Waterwheels and *naga's* in Adindan district, 1963. Based on a map in Zein, Water and Land in a Nubian Village: A Study of Adendan. M.A. thesis, Sociology/Anthropology (1966/26), American University in Cairo.

# Socioeconomic Implications of the Waterwheel in Adindan, Nubia

Abdul Hamid el Zein\*

In any society, problems will arise where the area of cultivatable land and the water supply are both strictly limited, and where this limitation is aggravated by continuous division of land between inheritors. A good example of such a situation is Adindan, a Nubian district at the southern edge of Egypt near the Sudanese border, with a population of 1,790 in the 1960 census. Over the years, Adindan has developed ways of maintaining an equilibrium between the sectioning of the land and its usability. Here, we examine in detail Adindan's adjustments to its ecological situation. This will involve analyzing the family, the land, and the waterwheel, and their relationships to each other.

Most of Nubia was in the past irrigated by waterwheels. But since the heightenings of the Aswan Dam and the introduction of irrigation projects, the waterwheel has almost entirely disappeared except in Adindan, where the traditional system still exists. Adindan lies across the river from the district of Ballana, which has a permanent government irrigation project, begun in 1933, providing water throughout the year for about 2,200 feddans of land. A few sentences will suffice to show the differences between Adindan, the traditional situation, and Ballana, where introduction of the irrigation project has brought many changes.

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\*An earlier version of this article appeared in *Contemporary Egyptian Nubia*, vol. 2, ed. Robert Fernea, Human Relations Area Files (1966): 298–322. Reproduced by permission.

The first and most important change is the use of mechanical pumps for irrigating rather than the old waterwheels. The mechanical pumps have made possible the reclamation of large areas of land; this has attracted a great number of Upper Egyptians to Ballana to cultivate the land for Nubian owners, who in turn take a portion of the harvest as rent. Still more Upper Egyptians have come to Ballana to open up shops and other businesses. A glance at the following two tables shows the great number of Upper Egyptians in Ballana, 299, as opposed to seven in Adindan.

**Table 1: Upper Egyptians in Ballana and Adindan**

Village	Agricultural workers	Charcoal workers	Fishermen	Shopkeepers	Total Upper Egyptians
<b>Ballana</b>	273	6	12	8	299
<b>Adindan</b>	—	3	2	2	7

*Source:* documents of the UAR Social Union, 1963.

If we compare Table 1 with Table 2, which shows the number of agricultural workers according to 1960 statistics (fishermen are but a small fraction of the total), we will find that about one-third of the agricultural workers in Ballana are Upper Egyptians, while in Adindan there are no Upper Egyptians at all working in agriculture.

**Table 2: Total Numbers of Nubian and Upper Egyptian Agriculturalists**

Village	Agricultural workers and fishermen
<b>Ballana</b>	905
<b>Adindan</b>	178

Ballana, therefore, is a Nubian district that has been exposed to outside forces, due to the establishment of the government irrigation project, the reclamation of new lands, and the flow of new settlers from other districts of Nubia. Adindan, on the other hand, constitutes a more traditional group of Nubian villages, where some historic characteristics of Nubian society are still found. Its inhabitants are proud of the fact that throughout all Nubia they still have the largest number of waterwheels: thirty-three in the village proper and six on the island. I have chosen to study the system of agriculture, irrigation, and land distribution in Adindan because its central importance in

a Nubian community has not been affected by government projects or new settlers.

### **Patterns of Cultivation in Adindan**

Cultivation in Adindan depends on the waterwheels, the use of which is affected by the depth of water in the river. This in turn is affected by the opening and closing of the reservoir at Aswan in summer and winter, and by the water that comes from the south during the flood season.

When the Aswan dam closes during the accumulation period (from November to July), the water in the Nile rises and the waterwheels work effortlessly. The people of Adindan cultivate their land starting in November and ending in April. This, their major cultivation effort, provides a great share of their food for an eight-month period. During this winter cycle they cultivate the higher land, for it is not flooded with reservoir water during this period. This plain, composed mostly of alluvium, stretches back from the Nile to the mountains, its divisions marked by a number of waterwheels situated on the river bank of Adindan from north to south.

1. The southern region—about 250 feddans of land extends from the Kojji waterwheel in the south to the Abu Noseir waterwheel. It is highland mostly, somewhat sandy and of variable quality.
2. The middle region—about four hundred feddans, starts at the al-Gama waterwheel and extends to the Hawaren waterwheel. The land of this region is alluvial and very fertile.
3. The northern region—about 150 feddans, starts at the Ablokuk waterwheel and extends up to the Defterky waterwheel. It is low-lying land of variable quality.

The productive areas of this plain differ from winter to summer. The southern region, being elevated, is the largest in size during the winter, when the water is high. The northern region has the smallest cultivatable area during the winter because most of it is flooded. This geological demarcation has created obvious differences between the agricultural activities of the southern and middle regions on the one hand and the northern region on the other.

This land of the waterwheels, in the three regions mentioned above, is divided by cultivators into two parts. Horse beans are grown in one and wheat in the other. Horse beans are planted usually a month before the wheat and thus they ripen a month earlier. When the horse bean crop has been harvested, maize is immediately planted in its place, and is harvested in June. The flood waters recede first from the lowest-lying northern region, leaving

its waterwheels dry. Since the plain is irrigated only by the waterwheels, the cultivators cannot water their summer crop, a dry kind of plant used for animal fodder.

But when the water recedes from the northern regions, it leaves behind a big plane of alluvial mud, called the *garf*. This land is planted with maize or millet and it does not need to be irrigated because the winter flooding leaves its soil remains sufficiently moist.

The middle and southern regions, on the other hand, are high. So even after the flood water recedes, the farmers are able to irrigate their crop of *durra* (which they use for bread). They use a system of artificial water channels that carry the water from the Nile in big ditches on which the waterwheels are situated. (See images 53, 54, 55).

The recession of water in the southern and middle region of Adindan leaves only a narrow strip, which the men do not care to farm. However, it is cultivated by the women, who grow feed for their animals. The more animal food a woman plants, the more goats and sheep she can keep. In these regions, two women frequently own an animal on a fifty-fifty basis and either partner can keep the animal, provided she can feed it. Men do not interfere in these partnerships, which are considered private women's affairs.

Toward the end of May when the men of the northern region begin cultivating the *garf*, the men of the southern and middle regions will be still digging channels from the Nile to carry the water to their waterwheels. But at the end of June they turn their attention to repairing their waterwheels and resting their animals, in preparation for the cultivation of the summer-fall flood season. They are also busy threshing and getting ready to store their crops of horse beans and wheat.

In August the flood water comes from the south and the waterwheels in the middle and southern regions are able to work, if the water is delivered to them through canals. At that time the summer millet is planted, where wheat was planted before. It has to be irrigated until it ripens in October. But the irrigation procedure is arduous at this time of year, and many farmers prefer to move to the nearby island.

The island of Adindan was formed by an accumulation of alluvium in the middle of the Nile and faces the center of Adindan district. In the past it was about two hundred feddans in area, but over the last thirty years, it has gradually been swept away by the Nile, and now is only about eighty feddans.

During the summer-fall flood about half the landowners and farmers move to the island, where they rest and pasture their animals and do some *naor* method cultivation. This method does not require much hard work: the

farmer makes a hole about five centimeters deep in the ground and puts the seeds in it, then covers it with mud. This method works very well on the island where the earth is constantly damp and no irrigation is needed.

The inhabitants of the northern region and southern region of Adindan do not move to the island, although they own lands there. Instead they rent their lands to the inhabitants of the middle region, and keep at their own work of cultivating the *garf* land during this period.

## The Waterwheel

As we have seen, there are three cultivation periods in Adindan, but the most important is the winter cultivation, which depends on the waterwheels to lift water for irrigation. Therefore let us turn to the waterwheel itself.

The waterwheel, the traditional method of irrigation, plays a very important role in the life of its users who have developed a well-organized system of maintaining and operating the machine and distributing water. Disagreements concerning the distribution of water may prevent the cultivation of strips of land, which is a waste of valuable resources. Thus the need to distribute the water that the wheel carries to the many subdivisions of the land makes certain kinds of cooperation an absolute necessity. It encourages and strengthens cooperative relationships between landowners as well as between relatives, even to the point that an individual who owns the right to the water or land, may on occasion relinquish it for the sake of another individual. The waterwheel then is a very important factor which contributes to social unity in this district, as we shall demonstrate.

The word *saqiya* (waterwheel) has two meanings. First, it denotes the machine which is used to lift the water and irrigate the land. The Nubian word is *essi kale*. The names of most of the parts of the waterwheel are very similar in the Mahas and Kenuzi dialects.<sup>1</sup> The word *saqiya* also means the area of land on which the waterwheel is situated, and which is irrigated by the water that it lifts. If the waterwheel breaks down, the landowners may rent some of the water that is lifted by other waterwheels, without affecting ownership.

In the past, land owners used to live close to the waterwheel that irrigated their land, and the name of the waterwheel took the same name as the residential area of the land owners. Thus, for example, Khalifa waterwheel was associated with the village of Khalifa. The flood of 1946 destroyed their houses and led the villagers to build their homes up in the mountains so that in this, and many other instances, the *saqiya* no longer means a residential area.

The waterwheel has two parts. The lower part or base is made of six pieces of very strong mahogany, cut to the size chosen by the carpenter. Farmers interested in sharing a waterwheel dig six deep holes in the ground and fix the wooden sections in these holes so that three pieces face the other three. There is a specified distance between each opposing pair of pieces, and the two biggest ones are fixed in the Nile itself. (This is why the building and repairing of the waterwheel is done only in summer when the Nile water recedes from the land.) These six segments of wood are tied to wooden cross-pieces which are in turn covered with palm branches; this constitutes the base of the waterwheel, on which cows move while it is in operation. Only rope woven of palm fiber is used to tie the pieces of the waterwheel together.

The segments that form the upper part of the waterwheel are, from the point of view of the sharers, different from the lower ones. While the lower pieces become common public property as soon as they are placed in the waterwheel, the upper pieces remain the property of their original owners, who have the right to collect rent for them. No one collects rent, however, since each partner has contributed a part.

The upper parts of the wheel can be removed without structural damage to the machine and used on other waterwheels. The lower parts, on the other hand, cannot be removed except by digging them out which ruins the entire machine.

The upper machine is formed of vertical and horizontal geared wheels. These are usually owned by a single person, because they are made and operate together. The vertical wheel is bigger than the horizontal wheel, therefore the vertical one turns once for every two turns of the horizontal one. The pillars on which these two geared wheels are fixed belong to two different owners. The horizontally geared wheel is connected with what they call simply the 'wheel.' When the vertical gear rotates it affects the rotation of the 'wheel,' that carries the buckets first down into the river water, then, after they are filled, upward to where they will empty over a channel made of an emptied palm trunk. From there the water falls into the major ditch of the waterwheel. This ditch built by all the sharers in the wheel carries the water onto the land; every cultivator opens up outtakes from it for his own use.

The buckets are tied to the wheel with a rope made of white fiber which they call *alalas*. The sharers prepare this rope; each sharer who holds one *qirat* of land and one of water has to prepare one *mann*, about two yards of rope. The pieces of rope are all wound together to form the *alalas*, which holds the twenty-four buckets brought by the owners of the twenty-four *qirats*.

The cultivated land, the land close to the Nile, is served by thirty-three different waterwheels. The unit that forms the land irrigated by the waterwheel is called 'feddan' in Nubia, without any consideration as to the actual size; it does not indicate the formal measurement ordinarily referred to by this name in Egypt. Thus a waterwheel area of twenty-four feddans or one of only eight feddans may in Nubia be called simply a feddan.

The land of the waterwheel, the feddan, is divided into twenty-four equal parts, each one of which is called a *qirat*. These *qirats* are divided among the landowners. The ownership of the waterwheel is connected with the ownership of the land, because every share owner of the land must help build the waterwheel and also donate one of its parts. This sharing in the waterwheel is an essential prerequisite of land ownership in the zone it irrigates. Every land owner owns a part of his waterwheel and every sharer in the waterwheel irrigates his land from the water lifted by this waterwheel.

Before the building of the Aswan reservoir, the waterwheel used to run in four cycles every twenty-four hours, twice during the day and twice at night. The first run, called *mashner*, started at sunrise and continued until noon; the second, called *alka*, from noon to sunset; the third called *absa* from sunset to midnight; and the fourth called *shayeg*, from midnight until sunrise.

Every landowner takes charge of a number of runs corresponding to his shares in the land. Since there are four runs a day, six days a week, twenty-four runs correspond to the twenty-four *qirats* of land in every waterwheel. The wheel used to work day and night when the Nile waters were low and the clay buckets, used at that time, were small. The amount of water lifted during each run was minimal, and the cultivated land, parts of which are now covered by water, included a larger area. But after the final heightening of the first Aswan dam, Nile water rose and became more accessible. The clay buckets were replaced with metal ones bought in Cairo and Aswan, or other cities where the cultivators' relatives were employed. This change ended the night runs of the waterwheel.

A *qirat* of land, which once received a *qirat* of water every six days, now gets a *qirat* of water every twelve days. The week starts on Saturday and ends on Thursday. On Friday the *soktor* (revolution) takes place whereby those who the week before took an afternoon turn now take the morning run, and vice versa.

### **Cow Ownership**

"The waterwheel is the cows and the people" is a proverb in Adindan which means that the waterwheel cannot operate without both elements, and the

absence of one or the other means an end to cultivation. Since cows are so important, every cultivator in Adindan tries his best to own, or at least be a partner in the ownership of, two cows. The very few who own only one have developed a system between themselves, which they call *menakla*, whereby two cultivators who possess one cow can borrow each other's cows when their shift for the running of the waterwheel comes. The partner who borrows the cow feeds it, uses it at the waterwheel, and then returns it to its owner. In general, the cultivators do not like the *menakla* system, and they only turn to it when a cow dies and cannot be quickly replaced.

Partnerships between kin are usually created by presenting a relative with a cow or by rewarding him for some reason. A cow may also be given when the owner is not in need of it but does not want to sell it. This kind of partnership does not create an active economic tie; the cow is not priced before the partnership is agreed upon and either of the relatives with an interest in the cow may take its offspring.

When a farmer needs a new cow to run the waterwheel he looks for one which he can share. New cultivators, also, very rarely buy cows; they start by sharing one. A farmer who needs the cow looks for a yearling and goes to the calf's owner asking him to accept a partnership. If there is agreement, someone (usually an Adindan elder who is considered knowledgeable about cows) is brought to fix the value of the animal and this decision is final. The farmer who needs the cow pays three-quarters of the price; no real partnership (except between relatives) is ever completed without the payment of this proportion of the price, and the man who pays the largest share always takes care of the cow, feeds it, and keeps it in his barn. Sometimes the payment is immediate and in cash but the usual procedure is that only part of the money is paid immediately and the rest when the cow begins to calve; these calves become saleable properties of the man who cares for the cow. Cows, but not oxen, are owned in partnership.

This partnership needs social testimony, which takes place during the pricing ceremony. The ceremony is attended by outsiders, who are advised of it in the daily informal gatherings of the farmers as they sit together in the shade of their waterwheels.

Such meetings (*winsa*) are very important occasions for members of the community to discuss their affairs. News in Adindan travels quickly, and it is enough that two or three persons attend the pricing for the results to become public knowledge.

Before the raising of the Aswan dam in 1933 the ownership of cows in Adindan was not in the hands of a few persons as it is today. A handful of

residents with cash were at that time able to buy cattle smuggled from the Sudan, and today they own most of the cows and are able to decide who can have them in partnership. They have even tried to influence people politically through offering partnership in their cattle. Yet, other factors help keep the large cattle owners from gaining too much power. Since no one in Adindan owns enough land to feed a large number of cows, those who do possess the cows must enter into partnership with outsiders who can provide the food. The farmers, therefore, can refuse partnerships if and when the owners of the cows try to take advantage of their position.

Cow owners thus must maintain good relationships with the farmers lest they be forced to sell their cows to butchers and lose the permanent income they have by giving the cows out in partnership. Both partners sharing a cow are dependent on each other if the relationship is to remain mutually profitable. However, the cow owners sometimes take advantage of the winter cultivation, the most important in Adindan, and exert pressure on the cultivator who needs the cow. If no agreement is reached the owner demands a termination of the partnership, which means that one of the partners must pay off the other in cash. Because the cultivators seldom have money, it is the cow owners who pay and get back their cows. But in such cases someone is sure to present the cultivator with a cow, one of his neighbors, or fellow cultivators who uses the same waterwheel, or another cow owner. The cow problem is a common one and whenever it occurs everybody turns to help, because everybody knows well that the loss of the winter cultivation means no food for eight months.

When a cow owner repeats such breaches of partnership, he is looked down on by the community, and his other partners leave him one by one, so that he eventually has to sell his cows. We find also that the farmers, being unsure of the unpredictable cow owners, try their best to own outright at least one cow, for fear they will lose both cows together and not be able to lend a cow in return for the one they need to borrow. And if a cultivator has to have two cows on a partnership basis, he makes sure that the two cows belong to two different owners, which lessens the chance of both being taken away at the same time.

This state, in which a cultivator is constantly afraid of his partner's decisions, encourages good relations with the farmer's neighbors because he knows that he may need their help someday. No poor farmer can survive without the help of others, and therefore when someone has a problem everyone cooperates until it has been solved.

We have seen that the cultivator who keeps the cow in his barn is supposed to pay to its original owner a sum equal to three quarters of the cow's

price. The first payment is usually less than this amount; the rest is paid in installments as the cow starts to produce offspring. The original owner has a right to the calves as long as the share of his partner has not been fully paid. Once the payment is completed, the calves become the property of the partner who has the cow in his possession, and in turn he has the right to accept a deal from another cultivator, after he has asked the opinion of his partner, the original owner. In this case the original owner either sells his share in the quarter of the calf to his partner, the new owner, or both owners retain a one quarter: three quarters stake in their share, while selling the three quarters to the new partner. Thus a cow is divided into *qirats* whereby the new (third) partner owns eighteen of the twenty-four *qirats* and the remaining six are shared by the original two partners; four-and-a-half *qirats* or three-quarters for the second owner and one-and-a-half *qirats* or one-quarter for the first owner. This is as far as the division of the cow ever goes; like the water that is lifted by the waterwheel, the cultivators have agreed to put limits on its subdivision.

There are no regional barriers to cow ownership. A cultivator in the north may have a partner in the south. These strong ties and sense of cooperation involve all the villages.

This circulation of cows means that every cultivator has, in the possession of others, something that is economically important to him. Thus every individual is linked to others by mutual interests.

## **Land Ownership**

We have described briefly some of the social and economic consequences surrounding the construction and operation of the waterwheel. Let us now examine the waterwheel in relation to ownership of the land itself.

The waterwheel affects the distribution of land and the extent to which it may be subdivided. And because the building of a waterwheel requires much hard work, no one individual is able to build it by himself. At first, a group of men, often not kin, drawn together by the fact that they own very small pieces of land, agree to share in the construction. Each cultivator in the group owns a piece of land that he is capable of cultivating alone and which suffices for his dependents. When he enters as a partner, his primary aim is not to increase his holdings, for as long as his needs and those of his dependents are met, he does not want any more land. In fact, the ability to work the land is a prerequisite to owning it. The community, in Adindan, decides whether a person deserves to be a landowner and the amount of land that he should own; the decision cannot be left in the hands of individuals. Each

farmer is allowed as much land as he can cultivate.

We do not find much difference in economic status in Adindan. The community represented by the elders and the waterwheel directors does not allow any one individual to take land in different waterwheel districts, if he is not able to cultivate it. To save natural resources the land is given to someone who can make full use of it, which means that an individual is not given all the land he asks for. Rather, the *kbuli*, or waterwheel guard, and the other sharers, give him only as much as they think is sufficient for him and his dependents. As his children grow and marry, a cultivator seeks new shares in waterwheels, which he is given as long as there are young men in the family who can cultivate the land and who are in need of its produce for their new families.

It appears that this would cause land ownership to be concentrated among the larger families. This is true, but it does not lead to large economic discrepancies, because these families only own relatively larger amounts of land as they increase in size and their resources become inadequate. Land ownership in Adindan is a dynamic social process, related to micro-demographic factors. If a family becomes smaller, we find that the landowners in it dispose of some of their land by giving it to others or by marrying their daughters to young men who either do not own enough land in Adindan or have none at all. The head of the family gives a piece of family-owned land to the man who married his sister or his daughter or any female of the family. In Adindan much land is thus redistributed through marriage. But although the right to make use of the land belongs to the new recipient, formally it remains the property of the original family. In such cases, the children do not refer to the land as being owned by their fathers, but rather as land given to their fathers by their maternal grandfathers at the time of marriage. As such, land ownership is not a static feature of life in Adindan and shifts from person to person by means other than inheritance alone.

Nothing definite is known about land ownership in Adindan in the long period that preceded the rule of the Keshaf, the group of Turkish soldiers who were sent in exile to Nubia by the rulers of Egypt in the nineteenth century. The Keshaf were given the rights to rule the district and collect taxes. With no surplus of cultivated goods or cash and unable to pay the taxes, many Nubians fled with their families, leaving their land behind. The Keshaf redistributed this land among their followers and the people who could afford to pay the taxes.

The Keshaf treated the cultivators as serfs and banished any farmer as they wished even if the land had been cultivated before him by his parents

and grandparents. The Keshaf forced the inhabitants to cultivate every little strip of land in order to maximize tax income. At every waterwheel they posted a man whose responsibility was to collect taxes and to keep intact markers indicating land divisions. He was also charged with the distribution of water shares among the cultivators; this was done only once, when the waterwheel was built. After that a farmer who did not own a cow was never given a share of water, because such a cultivator could not help in running the waterwheel, nor pay taxes.

This state of affairs continued until 1902 when a governmental decree gave the Nubian farmers ownership of the land they cultivated. Thus every farmer in Adindan became a landowner. Soon another decree followed, appointing government officials to collect taxes, taking away from the Keshaf the last of their power.

Because the Keshaf had considered themselves rulers but had not cultivated themselves, they were left without land after the 1902 decrees. This explains why they own little land in Adindan except through marriages with the original inhabitants of the land, who call themselves the Orban. After the 1902 decree, the ownership of land and its redistribution was formally managed in accordance with the Muslim law of inheritance. Nevertheless, in Adindan use of the land bypasses rules of inheritance.<sup>2</sup>

Anyone who needs land can cultivate it if there is no heir or if the heir can manage without it. Thus, the plots of the waterwheels are still called by the names of the original owners of the land, and not by the names of the present inheritors and cultivators.

In order to understand this state of affairs, we must first address the Nubian differentiation between the family and the house. In Adindan there are no tribes, only extended families subdivided into houses. The family is composed of all the male descendents of a single ancestor who depend for their livelihood on the land inherited from a common ancestor. The house, on the other hand, is composed of a husband, wife, and their dependent children. Once the children are grown and married, this one house subdivides into a number of houses, as every son establishes a home. But these new houses do not become complete until the man of the house is independently supporting his wife and children.

Now because the land passes from generation to generation without any subdivision, these houses cannot become completely independent until the death of the father and all his brothers: the death of the father leaves the son working the land that was owned by his father, but he cannot say that his house has become completely independent until the death of all his paternal

uncles. Thus a new generation rises and becomes the real owner of the land until its end arrives, and the generation that follows takes over. But the land does not change its name, as it passes intact from generation to generation. Each successive generation asks only that the piece of land that their father had in each waterwheel be pointed out to them. If this piece is big enough they will subdivide it between brothers and sisters in accordance with the Muslim law of inheritance, calling the whole piece by their father's name, but always adding that it is the share that their fathers received from their grandfathers. Such a piece of land is called *abadi*. If any descendent of this particular father lives on the land of the waterwheel where the land is situated, he will cultivate that piece. If not, the land will be left for the use of relatives who live there, on condition that the original father's right as heir continues to be recognized.

However, though all the members of the extended family share in the land, it does not follow that the products of this land are thus divided among all the houses of the extended family. Rather, they are distributed among those persons whose father and father's father had major cultivation rights in the particular waterwheel, in accordance with Muslim law. It is usually one of these co-inheritors who does the actual cultivation, and takes two-thirds of the produce as the farmer's portion, in addition to this inherited share of the remaining third.

Since the agricultural yield in Adindan is no longer sufficient, due to the limited amount of land, many of the inhabitants have moved to the city, often leaving behind only one member of a house to cultivate. If this brother dies, then one of his brothers returns to the village to take charge of his father's land. Ordinarily, brothers in the city do not ask for their legal share of farm products, because they know that if everyone asked for his legal share no one could afford to farm.

The inhabitants have circumvented the Muslim law of inheritance, not out of considered opposition, but because continuous subdivisions of land would have led to the inability to make use of their only resources. The waterwheel is also a very important factor in discouraging fractionization of land resources.

We have seen that the land of the waterwheel differs from region to region, because of the difference in the nature of the land. Land in the southern and northern regions is not as good as the land in the middle region. This has led to differences in the form of land division between regions.

In the middle region the waterwheel is divided lengthwise into strips among its builders. The owner of three *qirats* in this district will have all his

in one piece, in a strip from the Nile upward the mountain. This means that in this district all the property of one family is gathered in one piece, which they call *shakik*. We find waterwheel land in this district divided into rectangles that, in general, reflect the subdivision of the local extended family. However, this subdivision is only nominal in that it merely serves to add to the name of the original owner of the land the names of the men of succeeding generations who cultivated it. So in one sense the land remains a unit but in another respect it gets subdivided into smaller units.

As we have said, the land of the southern and northern waterwheels is not consistently good. Therefore one landowner's property in this region is not all in one piece, as is the case in the middle region. To avoid the inequality that would result if the good land is owned by any single cultivator, the property of everyone is divided into several pieces, one being situated in the good cultivable land, another in the lesser area and so on. This kind of land division is called *torbal fagd* by the inhabitants which means 'the division of cultivators.'

In cases where cultivators are not able to divide the land into small plots, as mentioned above, they have devised another method, whereby they exchange the plots they cultivate. Every year each cultivator moves onto his neighbor's land, which he tills while his neighbor shifts to someone else's land. Each year they shift again in accordance with a system that ensures rotation of land use among all the cultivators in each *saqiya*. This might appear to contradict what we mentioned above concerning lands retaining the original owner's names and yet reflecting subdivisions that occur within the descent group of these original landowners. If these lands are divided into small pieces, and are cultivated interchangeably by the inhabitants, how is it that they keep the names of the original landowners? The fact is that in every waterwheel there is a piece of land that the cultivators do not use interchangeably, and which is divided only among the descendants of the original sharers of the waterwheel. This land keeps the name of this original shareowner, and it is called *abadi* also. It is not necessary that it should be the best land of the waterwheel.

Although the division of land may differ from one waterwheel to the other, the distribution of water always remains the same, according to the amount of land owned. Thus many problems that might arise from subdivision and inheritance are circumvented by the rule that water shares cannot be divided even though the land may be. Let us see how this rule operates.

The distribution of water and the number of waterwheel runs remain as they were originally when the waterwheel was first built. If the share of one

of the waterwheel builders was three *qirats* of water (as he had three *qirats* of land), this share remains the same, and the inheritors among which the land has been subdivided have to agree about distributing the water share among themselves.

The subdivision of the water within a family, which is achieved by a distribution of the runs, is arranged to protect both resources—water and land. We have already said that every *qirat* of land carries a right to one *qirat* of water every twelve days. But often a descent group which owns a number of *qirats*, does not really subdivide its water shares and the houses of this family take their turn in the waterwheel runs according to the turn of the whole group and not according to the land they use as individual houses.<sup>3</sup>

The water from the wheel may be subdivided in Adindan as long as the subdivision does not lead to breaking the *qirat*, its smallest unit. Only when land is actually subdivided into pieces smaller than a *qirat* does a problem arise which usually ends by making it impossible to cultivate the land. Water cannot follow such a division, because the subdivision of the water *qirat* by, for example, half, would entail a change in the irrigation cycle, from one turn per *qirat* every twelve days to one turn every twenty-four days: since Nubia is a hot country, its cultivated land must be irrigated at least once every twelve days, and any delay causes drying up of the earth, making irrigation afterward very difficult. Therefore we find that when the process of subdivision reaches the point of breaking a *qirat* into fractions, irrigation problems arise within the family and result in the land remaining without water, and thus uncultivated.

When land subdivision threatens to reach this point, the members of various extended families interfere and try to mediate, but if the men involved refuse to listen, then the land is simply subdivided and left uncultivated. This kind of dispute usually arises between members of houses who are living in the city. A few narrow strips of uncultivated land in Adindan reflect such disputes.

However, the various houses forming a family usually accept the advice of the elders of Adindan and settle their dispute by giving the land to one member of this family to cultivate, satisfying themselves with a share of the agricultural yield. But if one of the houses of the family will still not agree to such settlement, the family may give him his share of the land, but refuse to give him his share of the water. This leaves him with the choice of either building his own waterwheel (which is nearly impossible because of the expense and because the Nile River frontage that he owns is too small) or of leaving this strip uncultivated.

This division of the land into narrow lengthwise strips is a kind of social sanction. Any individual who does not abide by social consensus and insists on the subdivision of land finds himself with a strip that cannot be cultivated. Even if a house tries to get water there are no quick and easy ways to irrigate such a piece of land. It is even impossible to build a shelter on the strip of land because it is too narrow.

Thus the waterwheel system, which does not allow the subdivision of water, has strengthened the relationships between the different houses that form a family. A proportion of these houses allow their relatives to make use of all the land and are satisfied to take only a share of the produce because they know that any other solution would lead to an end of cultivation and an economic loss for all. Thus many leave the village, and go to the city to seek employment since they cannot support themselves by farming a share of land.

## **Conclusion**

In Adindan the waterwheel system permeates all aspects of social and economic life, as we have seen. It irrigates the land and it also helps protect the land, the most valuable resource of the area, from becoming unusable through fragmentation. At the same time it perpetuates and strengthens certain social and economic ties between members of the community. On the one hand poverty and the inadequacy of resources encourages people to migrate and leave their land; on the other hand the desire to fully utilize existing resources leads the people to give up some of their individual rights, not only for the benefit of others, but also so as not to waste what is available. The waterwheel has helped create a method of partnership in the ownership of cows used to run the machine, and a useful system of land division, both of which strengthen the relationship of the various houses within families.

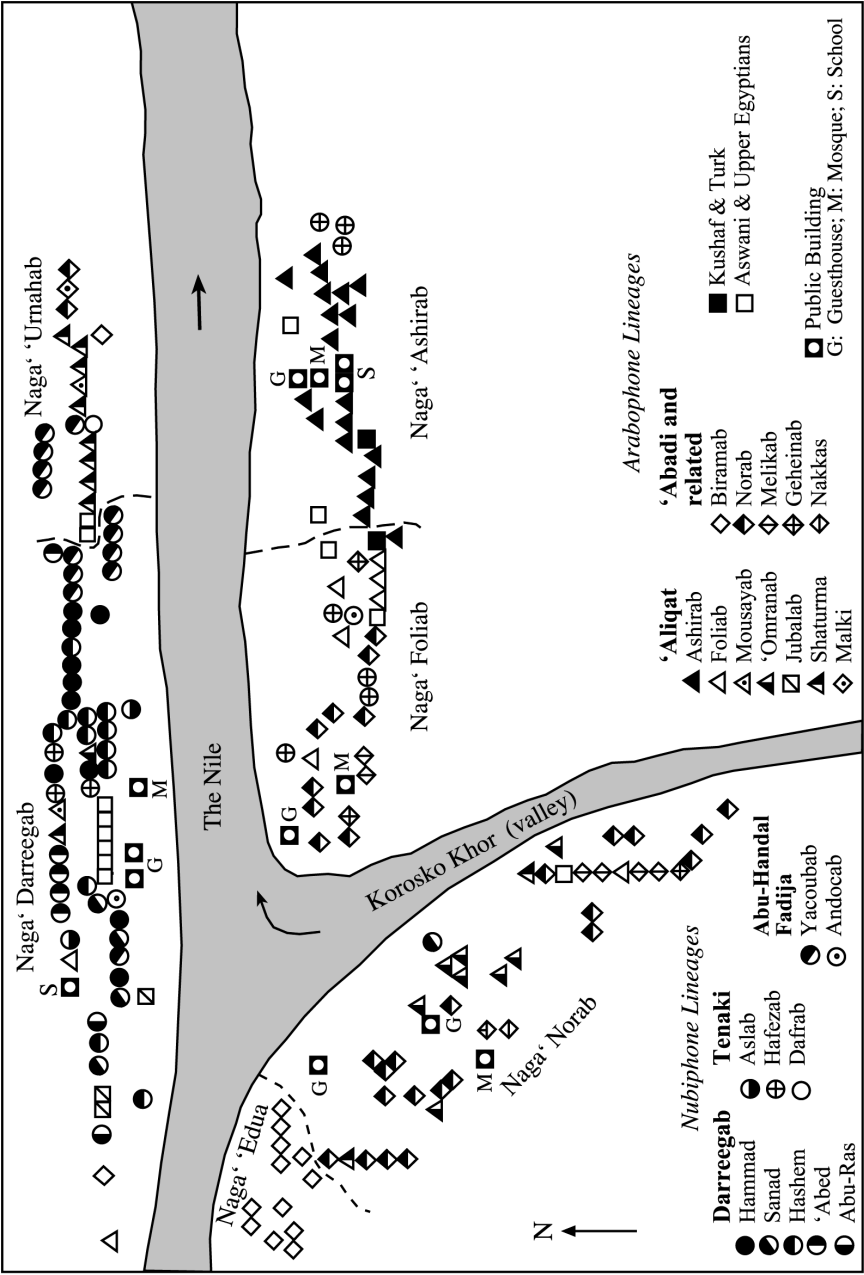
The waterwheel can also be viewed as a factor limiting economic differences among Adindan residents. Some of the inhabitants of Adindan, after earning wages in the cities, were able to buy land that they reclaimed above the waterwheels' land, usually trying to buy land situated near the waterwheel of their ancestors. To irrigate this new land, a man would have to enter into an agreement with the original owners of the waterwheels, which meant that he would have to distribute his newly reclaimed land among the builders of the waterwheel according to their traditional shares. These persons in turn would pay the price of this land in installments, whenever they had spare money. If the new owner did not agree, he would have to find another way to irrigate his land. Since the land on the bank of

the Nile owned by any one individual is too small, no one person can undertake such an enterprise alone. Thus he eventually cooperates with the various houses of his family to redistribute the water and, on the basis of the new land, enlarge the size of each of the twenty-four *qirats* they own. This weakens the relationship that bound the owners of the old waterwheel on one hand, and strengthens the relationship that binds the various houses of the one family that bought the additional land.

In conclusion, the systems that relate to the waterwheel are quite rigid for a combination of mathematical as well as ecological reasons. Unless, as in Ballana, completely new irrigation methods are adopted, the social demands and effects of the waterwheel system can only be ignored by placing in peril the subsistence base of the society. Thus, traditional irrigation agriculture both strengthens and depends upon good relations between members of descent groups with corporate interests. The continual rotation of land holding and the shareholding system of new ownership, however, goes beyond descent group membership to involve the entire community in a network of mutual interests.

## Notes

- 1 The buckets are called *fisbe* in Mahas, and Kenuz call it *bisbe*. The wheel is *doggoutti* in Mahas, and *dogotti* in Kenuz.
- 2 The Muslim law of inheritance provides that the land be divided among the sons and daughters of the father; each son receives an equal share, and each daughter receives half of a son's share.
- 3 For example, the descent group owns three *qirats* of land which correspond to three *qirats* of water, and these are divided into two shares: one *qirat*, and two *qirats* respectively. The three *qirats* of land get a run of the waterwheel every fourth day. The owner of the two *qirat* subdivision takes two consecutive waterwheel turns, then the owner of the one *qirat* share takes the third run. Such houses of the same group arrange the distribution of water among themselves. For while the owners of a waterwheel are the ones responsible for the distribution of the water among the 'families,' it is the responsibility of each family to supervise the distribution of its share of the water among its houses.



Map 6: Distribution of lineages and languages in Korosko, 1963. From Riad and Abdel Rasoul, "Influence of space relations on the tribal groupings of Korosko (Egyptian Nubia)" in *Annals of the Faculty of Arts*, Ain Shams University, 12:35-48 (1969), here between pp. 40 and 41.

# The Influence of Space Relations on the Tribal Groupings of Korosko

Mohamed Riad and Kawthar Abd El-Rasoul\*

## Space Relations

Korosko lies on the Nile, two hundred kilometers to the south of the city of Aswan.<sup>1</sup> The Nile in this region forms one of its major bends in Egyptian Nubia, known as the Korosko Bend. At Diwan, twenty-five kilometers upstream from Korosko, the Nile changes its direction. Instead of a south-west-northeast flow it turns to the southwest until Korosko then slowly begins a smooth curve until Singari where the course regains its northerly direction.

The Korosko Bend is of special importance to Nile navigation. It forms a great obstacle to boats sailing upstream. Local sailors call it “*al-magrur*” (the towed), that is, the reach of the Nile where boats are towed by ropes from the bank. The reason is simple. In Egypt and northern Sudan—thus including the whole of Nubia—the north and northeast wind prevails year round. Variations of the direction of the wind in this huge area are both local and minute. These northerly winds are by and large the decisive factor in successful Nile navigation upstream from the Delta to the White Nile in the Sudan. Downstream navigation makes use of the water current. In the Korosko Bend, the direction of the boat is reversed, complicating upstream navigation. The prevailing wind and the water current combine forces against sailboats to the

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\*An earlier version of this article appeared in *Annals of the Faculty of Arts, Ain Shams University* 12 (1969): 35–48. Reproduced by permission.

extent that they have to be towed by ropes from the bank. We may add to this that the water current in this bend is rather quick due to a relatively greater slope, the effect of the wind on the surface water, and the formation of many whirlpools which originate due to local conditions.

Downstream navigation in the Korosko Bend is a pleasure for sailors. The action of the wind and water current makes the crossing quick and easy, leading locals to call it "*al-Kaseb*"—the pushed or the swept away.

Though the whole length of the Korosko Bend does not exceed thirty-five kilometers, it is given much thought by all boatmen in Nubia. In reality this distance can seem much greater, especially during flood time. Not only must sailors contend with the tiresome job of towing the boat five to seven days upstream, the Nile with its numerous curves within the great bend adds to the difficulty of sailing due to the succession of actions of deposition and erosion. The result is a year-to-year difference in the depth of the water near the banks.

It also affects certain places where the rocky parts of the riverbed help in forming subwater islets. In addition, submerged rocky banks develop dangerous whirlpools. All these obstacles have to be calculated otherwise boats run the risk of being sunk.

During a conversation between us and one of the elders of Korosko who is supposed to know as much about the area as anyone does, he tried to explain the origin and meaning of the word Korosko. He told us the name was composed of two roots: 'kur' or 'kuro' in Fadija Nubian means 'the ascent' or 'the one who ascends.' In the same dialect, 'siko' means 'the descent.' In other words, he said, Korosko means the place where one ascends or descends the Nile or ascends or descends from the desert plateau to the valley.

At the moment we are not in a position to test the truth of such an explanation, but the position of Korosko in relation to Nile navigation on the one hand, and in relation to the caravan route to the Sudan on the other, gives this explanation a logical validity.

Korosko lies at the mouth of a dry valley that is named after it. The valley begins somewhere near the twenty-second degree of latitude and runs some hundred kilometers in a northern direction to the Nile. It forms a well-defined route across the mountainous desert and leads the caravans up to the flat Atmur desert and ultimately to the town of Abu Hamad, on the Nile in the Sudanese territories. The Korosko caravan route was the easiest shortcut across the desert between Egypt and the Sudan. It was widely used until the close of the last century when rail and steam engines replaced all caravan routes in this part of the world.

Around the beginning of the Christian era the camel began to be used extensively in the Egyptian deserts, slowly replacing the more hazardous donkey caravans. The town of Korosko, with its favorable geographical position, could not have escaped the notice of the Beja and the arabicized Beja nomads who roam the desert nearby. An appraisal of a long history of the Korosko caravan route is beyond our knowledge at the present time. The Korosko route was mentioned by some travelers, but was not as lucky as the 'Allaqi-Gabgaba route which was fully described by two eminent travelers in the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries.<sup>2</sup> Our knowledge of the importance of the Korosko route is mainly derived from the shaykhs of the Ababda tribe in Daraw (Upper Egypt) and other places where the Ababda had settled in Upper Egypt and Nubia.

The importance of the Korosko route was again stressed during the military operations undertaken by Egypt late in the last century to regain the Sudan from the Mahdi regime. Korosko was used as army headquarters for some time, and the Ababda played a vital role as army scouts and rearguard in these operations. The ruins of the palace of the shaykh of the Ababda at that time can still be seen as well as the remains of three army towers, a tribute to that historic epoch, still fresh in the mind of an aged ex-mayor of Korosko (about ninety years old).

Thus Korosko, owing to its spatial relations, enjoyed a locally cosmopolitan atmosphere in Nubia. Nile navigation and caravan routes have long created a microcosm of tribes and customs that mingled in many forms and norms not easily detectable and classified according to place of origin.

### **Peoples of Korosko**

The original population of Korosko must have been one or the other of the two Nubi-phone peoples of Egyptian Nubia. Whether these were Kenuz or Fadija Nubians we do not know. Cultural similarities in Egyptian Nubia make it a difficult task to settle such a question through studies in culture only.

The present-day picture of the Korosko population is clear and defined: the only Nubian-speaking people present here are the Fadija. As for the Arabo-phone residents, that is, the 'Aliqat and others, it is not possible to confirm whether they replaced or were integrated into the Fadija or the Kenuz population earlier.

### **The Fadija**

The Fadija of Korosko mark the northern limits of the Fadija country which extends as far south as the political borders of Egypt and the Sudan. Though

there are dialectical differences among the Fadija, Sukkot, and the Mahas, they all belong to the major Nubian linguistic group and speak the Mahasi language. There are so many problems related to the origin of dialectical differences within this language. Suspected elements of such differentiation are:

1. The Kushaf and the Boshnak.<sup>3</sup>
2. Sudanese refugees fleeing to the Fadija country during the Mahdi regime.
3. The settlement of nomadic groups.<sup>4</sup>
4. A Kenuz substratum in the Fadija country and/or continued Kenuz influence due to their monopoly of Nile navigation in the Fadija country.

**Table 1: Fadija Lineages of Korosko**

Lineage	Location (name of naga <sup>c</sup> )	Number of homes		Persons present in Korosko (Jan–Feb 1963)	
		Occupied	Deserted	per naga <sup>c</sup>	per lineage
Hemmad	Darreegab	7	3	33	33
Hashem	//	6	6	25	25
Sanad	//	3	1	8	8
Abu Ras	//	2	0	4	4
‘Abed	//	2	3	9	9
Hafezab	Darreegab	2	1	2	17
	‘Ashirab & Foliab	3	4	15	
Asiab	Darreegab	1	1	4	4
Dafrab	Urnab	0	1	0	0
Yacoubab	Darreegab & Urnab	6	7	18	18
Andogab	Darreegab	0	1	0	
	Foliab	0	1	0	
TOTAL		32	29	118	118

The Hemmad are, by far, numerically the strongest of the Fadija-speaking groups of Korosko. The lineage can be traced through six generations to its founder, a certain Mohamed Idris (Hemmad is the preferred shortened form

of Mohamed among the Fadija of Korosko). All sources agreed that Mohamed Idris was the head of all the Darreegab lineages. But all our informants failed to establish any biological connection between him and the founders of the other lineages. Neither were we able to trace the name Darreeg to any forefather. Moreover the genealogies of the other lineages correspond to that of the Hemmad, that is, they also go back six generations. This would not allow any feasible connection between the various lineages as far as our data permit. Thus we may conclude that these lineages are at the present time separate entities which once were, or were not, united in origin. The appellation Darreeg may have arisen to fulfill some sort of solidarity among all the Fadija-speaking groups of Korosko required by some historical event, for example, to stop the process of assimilation into the Arabic-speaking groups.

But as our research in Korosko progressed, we often came across statements denying that all the Fadija speakers are of Darreegab origin. The Hafezab, for instance, insisted upon a separate origin, claiming they are originally Tenoki, not Fadija.

The Tenoki, or in its Arabo-Nubian form, the 'Gharbiab' (meaning the westerners) claim a Quraysh (Mecca) Arab origin. In a manuscript jealously kept by an elderly member of the Hafezab, we followed a family tree of thirty-seven generations ascending to the time of the Prophet and related to him. We will not question the historical value of this document since it needs a separate treatment. Of interest to us, and of some validity, is the sequence of more recent names. Also of interest is a statement relating that the Gharbiab migrated to the area which extends from the city of Qena (Upper Egypt) to the town of Wadi Halfa (northern Sudan), and settled there hundreds of years ago. The document then cites instances of such settlements, who began the settlement and where. For example, two princes Saber Abdalla al-Gharbi and Najm al-Din al-Gharbi al-Ashaw, settled at Tumas (thirty-five kilometers upstream from Korosko), while the two princes Sharaf al-Din and Nasr al-Din settled near Daraw (Upper Egypt).

The names in this document are similar and repetitive, making it difficult to ascertain the position of the abovementioned princes on the family tree. As such, it is almost impossible to pinpoint with any accuracy the date and history of the settlement of this lineage in Nubia. Until the problem of the Tenoki is thoroughly studied, we have to content ourselves with the fact that the Gharbiab settled fairly early in Nubia and mixed with the Nubians to such an extent that the document could not ignore it. The unknown author of the document honestly concluded: "... we have the great honor to declare that we are Nubians."

In addition to that document there have always been claims connecting the Tenoki with the Ga'afra groups who live in the districts of Idfu, Kom Ombo, and Aswan in Upper Egypt. The Ga'afra allege a descent from 'Ali, the cousin of the Prophet. But at the moment we cannot positively identify any relationship between the Ga'afra and the Tenoki, and it might be preferable to deal with each separately.

The present center of Tenoki concentration seems to be in the area of Tomas. The Hafezab of Korosko admit a derivation from the Tomas Tenoki, though some of them still uphold the idea that they migrated to Korosko fairly early from the area of Benban (north of Aswan where they still recognize some remote relationship with Benbani families).

The Asiab and the Daferab problem is similar to that of the Hafezab. Informants maintain a Gharbiab origin for them, but while the Asiab are believed to have a Tomas Tenoki origin, the Daferab are said to be descendants of the Tenoki of Gatta (only five kilometers from Tomas). At present there are no Daferab living in Korosko. The last Daferabi was a ninety-year-old woman who died in February 1955.

The three Tenoki lineages of Korosko are only five generations removed from their respective founders: Hafez, Asi, and Dafer.

The Yacoubab are said to be originally a division of the Andogab lineage of Abu Handal (ten kilometers upstream from Korosko). Some of the Andogab lived in Korosko but migrated some years ago and their houses are left deserted.

Thus there are five lineages with the cumulative appellation of Darregeab. These are the Hemmad, the Sanad, the Abu Ras, the Hashem, and the 'Abed. The last cited lineage alleges a derivation from the Fadja of Diwan.

The Hamitic suffix 'ab' means in Arabic 'al' or 'bani' and denotes any patrilineal group from a lineage to a subtribe. Thus 'ab' may be understood as defining and denoting separate descent groups. The Tenoki of Korosko, that is, the Hafezab, the Asiab, and the Daferab on the one hand, and the two Abu Handal lineages, that is, the Yacoubab and the Andogab, on the other retain the 'ab' ending. On the other side, all the lineages that cling to the paramount name of Darregeab do not retain the same suffix. Can this be indicative of the proper Darregeab?

### **The Arabic-speaking Groups**

The second population segment of significance in Korosko consists of several groups who only speak Arabic. We can divide them into two major subgroups—the 'Aliqat and the Abadi, plus some smaller groups:

- A. The ‘Aliqat group comprising:
  - 1. The Korosko ‘Aliqat including a) the ‘Ashirab and b) the Foliab.
  - 2. Migrants from the Singari ‘Aliqat including a) the ‘Omranab, b) the Jubalab, and c) the Mousayab.
  - 3. Migrants from the Shaturma ‘Aliqat.
  - 4. Migrants from the al-Malki ‘Aliqat.
- B. The Abadi or Abadi alliances comprising:
  - 1. The Norab.
  - 2. The Melikab.
  - 3. The Biramab.
- C. The Upper Egyptian migrants surnamed the Aswani.
- D. The Kushaf descendents.
- E. The Gehienab or Robatab.

**Table 2: The ‘Aliqat Group**

Lineage	Location (name of naga‘)	Number of homes		Persons present in Korosko (Jan–Feb 1963)	
		Occupied	Deserted	per naga‘	per lineage
‘Ashirab	‘Ashirab	7	10	18	
	Foliab	0	1	0	24
	Darreegab	2	0	6	
Foliab	Foliab	6	1	22	22
	Norab	0	1	0	
‘Omranab	Urnab	2	6	6	
	Darreegab	1	0	1	10
	Foliab	0	1	0	
	Norab	2	1	3	
Jubalab	Darreegab	2	1	8	8
Mousayab	Darreegab	0	1	0	
	Urnab	1	0	4	4
Shaturma	Urnab		0	1	0
	Norab	5	2	11	11
Al-Malki	Urnab	1	0	1	1
TOTAL		29	26	80	80

The 'Aliqat tribe occupy central Egyptian Nubia from the 'umudiya of al-Madiq to the 'umudiya of Korosko. While they are the only compact and territorially contiguous Arabic-speaking group in Egyptian Nubia, their descent is rather obscure. J.W. Murray alleges a connection between the 'Aliqat of Nubia and the 'Aqilat of Sinai. Whether this allegation is right or not, reaction to it was enormous among the 'Aliqat, with many of them suddenly recognizing their relationship with a tribe they had never heard of before. Many a shaykh of the 'Aliqat of Singari now feels insulted if the tribe is called 'Aliqat. Such personalities demand that the tribe must henceforth be called the 'Aqilat. While admitting a possible corruption in the pronunciation of names, we must also admit that there exists a difference between the founder of the 'Aliqat and the 'Aqilat. 'Oqeil, from whom the 'Aqilat descended, is not the same person to whom the 'Aliqat are attached, namely Ibrahim al-'Ilq.

According to the wish of some of the 'Aliqat shaykhs, a paid genealogist published a book on the descent of the 'Aliqat.<sup>5</sup> In the extensive genealogies compiled and reproduced in this book, 'Oqeil, the founder of the 'Aqilat, became a forefather of Ibrahim al-'Ilq, the founder of the 'Aliqat. Now the orthodox shaykhs demand: if our father is Ibrahim al-'Ilq and our grandfather is 'Oqeil, why can we not change of the name of our tribe and attach it to our grandfather?

In the aforementioned book 'Oqeil's ancestry was pushed as far back as 'Ali ibn Abi Talib. In establishing a relationship between the 'Aliqat and the 'Aqilat, the 'Aliqat found themselves related to the Ga'afra of Upper Egypt due to a common descent from 'Ali. The new ancestry was warmly welcomed by the 'Aliqat.

One must admit that there exists an insistent obsession among many tribes in Egypt and the Sudan (and probably in other Arab countries) to be related to 'Ali and ultimately to the Prophet (or at least to be related to one or the other of the founders of the tribe of Quraysh of Mecca, from whom the Prophet is descended).

Notwithstanding this obsession, and though genealogical tables may be intentionally pushed up here and there to the desired ancestor, in our opinion there is no doubt that the 'Aliqat of Nubia originally are of Arab or arabicized descent. There are two reasons for our belief: 1) the 'Aliqat speak only Arabic, and 2) they once monopolized the caravan route between Egypt and the Sudan west of the Nile. This is a task naturally assigned to nomads. In this part of Africa the nomads who speak only Arabic are either Arabs or arabicized Beja.

Until today we are not able to answer questions related to the method and the time of 'Aliqat settlement in Nubia. As we will see later on, a vague idea about the date of settlement was inferred from the study of genealogy.

We also think that the 'Aliqat mixed with and assimilated the Nubians who already occupied the land before their advent. There are many cultural similarities among the 'Aliqat and the Kenuz Nubians of central Egyptian Nubia, such as music, some details of marriage and death ceremonies, and so on. This led us to the preliminary conclusion that the pre-'Aliqat inhabitants were Kenuz Nubians rather than Fadija.

The 'Ashirab are the strongest of the 'Aliqat of Korosko. They occupy nearly exclusively a *naga* of their own. For two generations the *'umda* (mayor) of Korosko was a member of the 'Ashirab, and many of them are fairly rich. The lineage goes back six generations to 'Ashiri, the founder of the lineage. Some orthodox 'Aliqat whom we met in Singari barely consider the 'Ashirab true 'Aliqat. This is due to many mixed marriages between the 'Ashirab and other Arabic-speaking and non-Arabic-speaking lineages of Korosko. There is also a certain tale designed to disgrace the 'Ashirab, relating that 'Ashiri, their founder, was not a man, but a woman. Naturally this would be taken as an insult in this area where patriarchy is very strong, but because such a statement is only always uttered in a friendly and joking manner, consequences are not disastrous.

The Foliab are assigned an 'Aliqi descent though we were not able to trace any connection between them and the 'Ashirab. This lineage goes back seven generations to 'Eid, their founder. We were also unable to trace the name Foliab either to any of the founders or to a certain event or nickname. One of the Foliab, three generations ago, married a Syrian woman and her grandson has a distinctly different complexion and physical features. She was the daughter of a Syrian trader and an Albanian mother, and was the only such case in Korosko.

The 'Omranab are a group after whom the *naga* where they and others mainly settle was named. We know that corruption of names may happen. The Fadija, unable to pronounce this Arabic name correctly, invariably call it Urnanab or Urnarab. These pronunciations were so common that many of the 'Omranab themselves came to use it. The 'Omranab are the third 'Aliqat group of Korosko and, like the Foliab and 'Ashirab, intermarry without discrimination with all the lineages of Korosko.

The Jubalab and the Mousayab of Korosko are branches of two 'Aliqat lineages who live in the *'umudiya* of Singari. The Jubalab hail from the 'Aliab lineage, while the Mousayab descend from a lineage bearing the same name.

The founder of both lineages, namely the two brothers 'Ali and Mousa, form the eighth ascending generation from the present-day generation. They were, according to the genealogies we gathered, the first persons to settle in Singari. This may indicate the approximate date of settlement of the 'Aliqat in Nubia, since most of the 'Aliqat claim to have settled down in Nubia at approximately the same date. Allotting thirty years to each generation, we may come to the conclusion that 'Ali and Mousa settled in Singari about two hundred years ago, that is, around 1750. We do not, however, have any other evidence to confirm this inference.

Only three generations ago, some of the 'Aliab and Mousayab moved in Korosko to form the present Jubalab and Mousayab. From the study of Jubalab and Mousayab households and marriages, we found that up to now endogamy prevails among the two branches of the one lineage. That is Jubalab girls marry their relatives of the 'Aliab of Singari and vice versa. The same pattern holds true among the Mousayab of Singari and Korosko. This is exactly what the 'Aliqat expect from true and conservative brethren, and may explain the 'Aliqat attitude toward the 'Aliqat of Korosko (the 'Ashirab, the Foliab, and, to a lesser degree, the 'Omranab). Owing to their mixture with non-'Aliqat, they are somehow diminished in the eyes of orthodox 'Aliqis.

In Table 2, the designation Shaturma does not stand for a lineage name. Shaturma is one of the 'Aliqat *'umudiyas* which lies to the north of Singari, about twenty kilometers downstream from Korosko. We do not know the exact reason for the movement of some individuals of Shaturma to Korosko. Marriage may be one factor, for we have observed that all such individuals are married to Koroskan women. Another factor may be sought in Korosko's earlier commercial position as one of the gateways to the Sudan. Added to this one may stress the extreme dexterity of the Shaturma people in various manual crafts, for example, charcoal making, pottery, cultivation, and carpentry related to agricultural implements. All these qualities may have led to a continuous exodus of the Shaturmans to places where their skill is in demand. Lastly, one may cite another possible cause: from our observations the Shaturmans seemed garrulous and quarrelsome in comparison with other Koroskans. This observation was confirmed by the police chief of al-Dirr (twenty-five kilometers upstream from Korosko) as well as the archivist of the Court of 'Aniba (administrative capital of Egyptian Nubia), who told us that a great deal of their work is 'supplied' by the quarrelsome Shaturmans. One may question whether this 'cultural attribute' was a factor inducing some of the Shaturmans to move away after some sort of trouble.

The last named in the list of lineages in Table 2 comprises only one family who moved several years ago from the neighboring ‘*umudiya* of al-Malki. After the death of the husband, the widow lives alone in their house.

**Table 3: Other Arabic-speaking Groups**

Lineage	Location (name of naga‘)	Number of homes		Persons present in Korosko (Jan–Feb 1963)	
		Occupied	Deserted		
				per naga‘ per lineage	
Norab	Norab	11	9	29	
	Foliab	8	2	22	56
	Urnab	1	1	5	
Melikab	Norab	3	1	7	7
Biramab	‘Edua	4	8	18	
	Darreegab	1	0	1	19
	Urnab	0	1	0	
Aswani	Darreegab	5	1	12	
	Urnab	1	1	2	
	‘Ashirab	1	1	3	20
	Foliab	0	2	0	
	Norab	1	0	3	
Kushaf	Foliab	1	0	6	6
Gheneinab & Robatab	‘Ashirab	0	1	0	
	Foliab	1	0	3	5
	Norab	2	0	2	
TOTAL		40	28	113	113

**‘Abadi or ‘Abadi Alliances**

The Norab are, by far, the largest single lineage in Korosko. Yet they are not, as a whole, well off in comparison with the Fadija or ‘Ashirab. The family tree of the Norab is pushed back fifty-three generations to ‘Ali, the cousin of the Prophet thus according them an Arabic descent and connecting them with the Ga‘afra of Upper Egypt. Putting this claim aside, we find

in this tree that the founder of the Norab lineage, El-Nour Mohamed, occupies the tenth ascending generation from the present day. All the Norab of Korosko descended from two brothers: Farah and Hasan 'Abdalla. The two brothers constitute the sixth generation in ascending order.

Assuming that the two brothers were the first to settle in Korosko, then the Norab likely came to this part of Nubia either late in the eighteenth century or early in the nineteenth century.

The family tree refers to Norab lineages living in the districts of Qena and Qus in Upper Egypt on the one hand, and to Norab living in the district of Port Sudan and among the Kababish nomads of northern Kordofan in the Sudan on the other. As we have done no research in northern Sudan, we are not in a position to disprove or confirm the claim that the Norab live in the places referred to in the Norab family tree. During previous research among the 'Ababda of Upper Egypt (1959–60) we came across a certain Norab population which formed one of the lineages of the Fogara 'Ababda. Whether these Norab are related to the Korosko Norab is a difficult matter at the moment. But we are tempted to connect both Norab groups due to the fact that those of Upper Egypt are of Fogara origin while the Norab of Korosko are related, in a direct or indirect way, to the Fogara.

One of the Fogara maximal lineages is called the Melikab. To avoid confusing it with the Melikab lineage now living in Korosko, we will call this maximal lineage the Melikab 'Ababda. The Melikab 'Ababda once monopolized the Korosko caravans to the Sudan. Many of the 'Ababda and even non-'Ababda lineages joined the Melikab 'Ababda in search of protection and profit. At the same time the Melikab 'Ababda welcomed them in to enlarge their own manpower. When most of the Melikab 'Ababda of Korosko migrated to settle in the Sudan early in the twentieth century, some of the 'Ababda society or their allies must have remained in Korosko, especially those who had invested their wealth in the land. In this category we are inclined to include the Norab, the Melikab, the Biramab of Korosko and Riga, and the 'Akarmia of Riga.

One of the elders of the Norab once told us that El-Nour, the founder of the Norab, and Melcek, the founder of the Korosko Melikab, are related to each other. On the other hand the Shaykh of the Korosko Melikab told us that the Norab are the rest of the Melikab 'Ababda, the 'Akarmia are one of the lineages of the Fogara 'Ababda, the Biramab are of Kushaf origin, and that his own Melikab are not related to the 'Ababda though names may resemble each other. He insisted that his Melikab are true 'Aliqat, same as the 'Ashirab and the Foliab.

While insisting on the 'Aliqi descent, the Shaykh of the Melikab could not remember further back than his direct grandfather, which is strange in this part of the world where most of the common people remember five, six, or even more of their forefathers' names. This may be one of the methods of forgetting old ancestry and getting a new origin.

### **Other Arabic-speaking Groups**

The three remaining groups hail from outside Nubia. The Aswani group is composed of families who came to Korosko as traders and craftsmen from Aswan and other parts of Upper Egypt. Most of them settled early in Korosko. As mentioned above, Korosko, owing to its geographical location, for long enjoyed a favorable market, thus inducing traders to settle down in the area. The Aswani group concentrated on the west bank, and especially among the Fadija of Naga' Darreegab. We recorded many mixed marriages between them and the Fadija, as well as the 'Ashirab. Many of the members of this group are bilingual, that is, they speak the Fadija dialect as well as their Arabic mother tongue.

The Kushaf are related to the Kushaf from the Abu-Handal, Diwan, and al-Dirr localities. So far historical documents tell that the Kushaf are the descendents of the multi-racial garrisons that were stationed in Nubia during the length of the Turkish occupation in Egypt. Forgotten in this remote country, the soldiers married among the Nubians and settled down, acquiring land by force. They rose to the status of a noble caste and formed princedoms of their own, while at the same time acknowledging a formal loyalty toward the governors of Cairo. At the beginning of the nineteenth century their regime was brought to an end by Mohamed Ali, the governor of Egypt at the time.

Though they incessantly married Nubians, traces of their physique betray their remote origin, for example, brachycephalism, development of the bony structure and lighter skin complexion (in comparison with the Nubians).

The Geheinab-Robatab group is of a mysterious origin. Their name seems to link them with some Arabic tribes of the northern Sudan, but at the moment we are not able to speak of any such link.

From this approach, one can see that though the population of Korosko is tiny, it is broken up into many lineages of different origins and languages.<sup>6</sup> To people who know Nubia, the composition of the Korosko population is amazing. This is so because Korosko is hardly analogous to any other part of Egyptian Nubia due to its geographical and historical circumstances.

## Notes

- 1 This article describes the state of affairs before the planned immigration of the Nubians which took place in 1965 and the filling up of Nubia by the water of the High Dam Lake.
- 2 J. Bruce, *Travels to Discover the Sources of the Nile* (Edinburgh: J. Ruthven and London: J. Robinson, 1790). J. L. Burckhardt, *Travels in Nubia* (London: John Murray, 1819).
- 3 See explanation of the term *kushaf* below under the subtitle “Other Arabic-speaking Groups.” The Bushnak are also the descendents of mixed marriages between the Bosnian (Balkan) soldiers and the Nubians.
- 4 Beja nomads, that is, Gararish.
- 5 Ahmed Lotfi el-Sayed, “The Arab Tribes in Egypt: The ‘Aliqat, the Ga’afra, and other tribes.” Cairo (in Arabic), 1935.
- 6 According to the general population census of 1960 in Egypt, the population of Korosko amounted to 408 persons, but our enumeration brings them to only 311 persons. The disagreement is largely due to the nature of seasonal migration of the Nubians.

# The Economic Basis of Egyptian Nubian Labor Migration

Thayer Scudder\*

## Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to describe and analyze Egyptian Nubian labor migration within the wider perspective of both migrancy and permanent migration as they occur throughout the African continent.<sup>1</sup> In the African literature the term 'labor migration' refers to the voluntary circulation of adult male and female laborers between their rural tribal homes and external areas, both rural and urban, of employment. Although Egyptian Nubian labor migration fits into the general pattern of African labor migrancy, it represents an extreme case.

Early in 1962, Dr. Peter Geiser and I visited sixty-six of the 536 Nubian villages listed by the Ministry of Social Affairs in the area between the site of the Aswan High Dam and the Sudanese border.<sup>2</sup> These villages were selected by Dr. Geiser from approximately every third *'umudiya* (district) in each of which a number of villages (including the largest and the smallest) were sampled to represent the range in village size. While the main purpose of the sample was to identify for intensive study over one thousand household heads currently residing in Cairo, rough labor migration rates were computed from the data collected. These range from 50 percent to 100 percent, the mean

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\*An earlier version of this paper appeared in *Contemporary Egyptian Nubia*, vol. 1, ed. Robert Fernea, Human Relations Area Files (1966): 100–142. Reproduced by permission.

rate being 85 percent and the mode 86 percent.<sup>3</sup> In other words, there were no villages in the sample in which over 50 percent of the adult male population was present while every post-pubescent male was absent from four of the smaller villages. Though there are some Nubian villages outside the sample with labor migration rates under 50 percent, we believe that the estimates noted above can be applied to Egyptian Nubia as a whole.

In areas combining cash cropping with subsistence cultivation, the stabilizing effect of cash crops on population is offset by land pressure unless increasing production on smaller holdings can keep up with rising expectations. Although the economy of Egyptian Nubia has long been focused on the cash cropping of date palms, the stabilizing effect of date production is more than offset by severe land pressure arising from population increase, the rules of Islamic inheritance, and the drastic reduction of cultivable land following the construction and subsequent heightening of the Aswan Dam.

### **The Economic Basis of Egyptian Nubian Labor Migration**

One of the most striking examples of the economic basis of African labor migration relates to the agricultural population of Egyptian Nubia where labor migrancy rates have increased during the twentieth century as per capita land resources have decreased. Throughout this portion of Nubia, the distribution and density of population has been determined through millennia primarily by the distribution and fertility of Nile alluvial deposits. According to Reisner (1923:7), these were extensively cultivated as long ago as the Middle Kingdom (2000 BC) when, "every foot of cultivable land was in use. The mouth of every little valley was occupied, sometimes, to judge from the size of the cemeteries, by merely a single family."

As for the basis of the present-day Nubian rural economy, this was established by the Roman introduction of the *saqiya* or Persian waterwheel. For the *saqiya* enabled the inhabitants of the Nile to extend their cultivation inland from seasonally inundated alluvia through the excavation of *saqiya* wells. The *saqiya*, as a result, "revolutionized the agricultural economy of the country and it does much to explain the greater fertility and the high density of population of Christian Nubia" (Kirwan 1963:272).

Even prior to the construction of the Aswan Dam, alluvial deposits in Egyptian Nubia were restricted in extent. According to Hewison (1948:740–41), among Nubian cultivators in the Sudan we may distinguish three major types of soil. The most fertile are *gezira* or *seluka* alluvia that are annually inundated and can be cultivated indefinitely. Found on low islands and along the banks of the contemporary channel of the Nile they are backed up by

*saqiya* soils, of which only the riverine margin can be efficiently cultivated by the Dynastic shadouf, which predated the *saqiya* by thousands of years. Except during years of exceptional flood (1946, for example) these *saqiya* soils are not inundated at high water. Though fertile, they cannot be cultivated indefinitely without the use of fertilizers and fallow rotations. Further inland are *karu* soils. Deposited by slow moving or stationary water, these finely particled heavy clays are typical basin soils that were not extensively cultivated prior to the twentieth century development of government pumping projects.

While the gradient of the Nile between the second and first cataracts is not much steeper than that found between Aswan and the Mediterranean (1 in 12,500 as opposed to 1 in 13,200), Nubian *gezira* and *saqiya* deposits are more restricted in their breadth than in the Egyptian region to the north. Probably the major reason for this is because the Nile apparently has been degrading its channel in Nubia since Sibilian times, while in Upper Egypt degradation was replaced by a period of deposition continuing to the present (see Sandford and Arkell 1933:54). Be this as it may, the width of the Nubian deposits vary from somewhat over a mile and a half (at al-Dakka prior to the first heightening of the Aswan Dam) to under ten yards (where hills come down practically to the river's edge). With average annual rainfall throughout Nubia at less than an inch (during historic times there has been no major change in climate), *saqiya* cultivation was restricted to this narrow belt, and even today there is no cultivation or human habitation over two miles inland. In fact since the advent of the *saqiya* there is some evidence to suggest that available alluvia have been reduced on the west bank through sand dune encroachment.<sup>4</sup>

The construction of the *saqiya* itself and the reclamation, terracing, and channeling of the adjacent land is an expensive operation. Since few men can afford the necessary capital, most *saqiyas* are built by four or five partners. These are usually from the same village although they are not necessarily related. Once the device is constructed and the land prepared, its operation requires the use of at least two yoke of cattle, the responsibility for which falls on the partners according to their share in the *saqiya*.

While the *saqiya* enabled cultivation to be extended inland to the outer margin of *saqiya* soils, it is mechanically inefficient as a water lifting device since there is "a great loss of power in friction, and much water lifted is spilt back . . . especially if a strong wind is blowing" (Allan 1948:628). Water loss, of course, is most severe during the hot season when it can be least afforded. According to Allan's Sudanese information (ibid), "At high Nile, with a lift of about 2 meters, probably 4–5 feddans can be kept under crop; during the

winter, 2 1/2 feddans, and at low river, when the weather is also at its hottest, from 1 to 1 1/2 feddans is about the maximum." In other words, when four to five equal partners are involved, the maximum amount of irrigated land that each can expect is one feddan which falls to half a feddan or less during the winter and low river seasons. Of this acreage up to 50 percent should be planted with fodder to maintain the *saqiya* cattle unless the partners are fortunate enough to have access to sufficient *gezira* land to meet their fodder requirements. The original partners have only a meager basis for subsistence, especially while waiting for their date palms to come into production. Even after the palms begin to yield, much of the capital gained through cash sales will eventually be necessary for *saqiya* maintenance and repairs.

Where land resources are scarce, as they are throughout Nubia, *saqiya* cultivation at best can only maintain a static population. If the population is increasing, as appears to have been the case during the past eighty years, the population increment from one generation to the next cannot expect to be supported through the *saqiya* exploitation of existing land resources. Marginal even to the original partners, these resources in fact may be indefinitely fal-lowed, once they have been subdivided among a greater number of heirs according to the tenets of Islamic inheritance.

When the Aswan Dam was completed in 1902 and subsequently heightened in 1913 and 1933, exploitable deposits in Egyptian Nubia were drastically reduced. By January of 1903 when the water level reached the reservoir capacity of 106 meters, *gezira* and some *saqiya* soils were inundated for most of the year throughout the Kenuzi-speaking region.<sup>5</sup> The first heightening of the Dam raised the reservoir level to 113 meters by February 1913 and flooded out *gezira* and *saqiya* alluvia as far upriver as Korosko in the Arabic-speaking region. As for the second and final heightening of the Dam, it brought the reservoir up to its new capacity of 121 meters by January 1938, and inundated the remaining *gezira* soils within Egyptian Nubia as well as Sudanese deposits as far south as the Second Cataract. Only the two southernmost Egyptian Nubian *'umudiyas* of Adindan and Qustul retained most of their *saqiya* alluvia, while the magnitude of the loss in the adjacent *'umudiyas* of Ballana and Abu Simbel was reduced only through the government construction of retaining walls.

North of Abu Simbel the impact of the development of the Aswan Dam on the resident Nubian population was catastrophic, especially after the second heightening of the Dam in 1933. At that time most Nubians reacted to the inundation of their limited holdings by choosing one of three alternatives. The first of these involved permanent emigration of entire households to the

cities of Egypt and the Sudan. Other household heads resettled their families in new houses on the sterile sands or sandstone deposits fringing the reservoir waterline, while they themselves spent most of their working lives as urban labor migrants, coming home only for short visits and on retirement. The third alternative involved those household heads who opted to continue an agricultural existence. Some of these permanently emigrated with their families to rural areas below the Dam in Upper Egypt, while others took their families to unflooded areas in Upper Egyptian Nubia. Still others rebuilt their *saqiyas* and *shadoufs* on the less fertile land and extremely limited alluvia immediately inland from their flooded land and homes. Here expanding families were even more susceptible to the implications of severe land pressure on marginal resources.

When we visited our sample villages in 1962, we passed many post-1933 *saqiyas* that had ceased to operate, adjacent lands lying under permanently fallow. In both the Kenuz and Mahas (Fadija) areas, some of the reclaimed land on the west bank was covered in sand, and it did not require much imagination to understand why cultivators had deserted their holdings, leaving only the vague outline of garden sections beneath the sand and the massive masonry of the *saqiya* as a reminder of past efforts. But such cases were the exception rather than the rule. Elsewhere the land was as fertile as when the *saqiya* had been operational, in fact probably of greater fertility because of prolonged fallowing. At the village of Wadi Migrabi, for example, in the Mahasi-speaking *'umudiya* of Abu Handel, there were four non-functioning *saqiyas* and at least twelve feddans of good land lying fallow. As elsewhere some of the *saqiyas* had stopped as recently as 1960 while others had stopped during the 1950s or even earlier.

While some of the *saqiyas* deserted prior to 1950 appear to have been shut down because of unexpected floods (see below), the others on which we have information usually ceased to operate after the death or retirement of one (or more) of the original partners, whose shares were then divided among his (or their) sons and daughters. As for the four Wadi Migrabi *saqiyas*, the number of partners with legitimate claims appears to have doubled in two cases and tripled in another. So long as the original partners used the land, the labor of their maturing sons was not required for cultivating the small holdings. With virtually no other resources to exploit, most of them left for Cairo and other urban centers either as labor migrants or permanent emigrants. Having found jobs there they were hardly in a position, economically speaking, to return to Nubia to inherit their father's land which had barely sufficed to support a single family let alone the several formed by the next generation. Even if the

heirs had been willing to forfeit their land rights to one or two men who were willing to forsake a higher standard of living in the cities in order to return to the land, these probably would not have been able to raise the cash necessary for *saqiya* repairs, since three of the four *saqiyas* had run down as the original partners had aged.<sup>6</sup> They also would have had to purchase new cattle, most heirs being unwilling to forfeit their claims there with the result that the beasts are sold and the cash shared out among the sellers.

Because of the rules of Islamic inheritance, population increase also leads to the subdivision of palms. In *'umudiya*s like Adindan where most palms have not been inundated by reservoir waters during their fruiting period of up to seventy years, each palm is currently owned by several heirs, none of whom by staying on the land can expect to profit from the fruits of his labor. Under such circumstances it is hardly surprising that the amount of land under cultivation has decreased as the population has increased, causing the inevitable subdivision of landholdings and palms among a greater number of heirs.

In comparison with Upper and Lower Egypt (the latter excluding Cairo, the Canal Zone, and the Northern frontier districts), the approximate Egyptian Nubian land resources per resident capita from Aswan to the Sudanese border in recent years is 0.28 feddans as opposed to 0.47 and 0.64 feddans respectively.<sup>7</sup> The contrast between Egyptian and Nubian figures is in fact even greater since the resident Nubian population does not include labor migrants. While this also applies to the Upper and Lower Egyptian figures, labor migrancy rates there are much lower. Delta deposits also can be cropped more frequently than those of Upper Egypt, which in turn can support more intensive cultivation than Nubian deposits. Furthermore at least two-thirds of the cultivatable land in Egyptian Nubia is restricted to thirteen government-pumping projects to which only a minority of the population has access.

High throughout Egyptian Nubia because of this extreme land pressure, labor migrancy rates increase within Nubia as per capita land resources decrease. This applies not only to different Nubian communities along the length of the Nile, but also to the same community at different points in time. This conclusion is based on analysis of agricultural surveys and the decennial reports of the Census of Egypt for the three linguistic regions of Egyptian Nubia and on the eight *'umudiya*s from which I selected a sample of eight villages for a more intensive analysis.<sup>8</sup> While the figures involved must be used with caution, they are probably more accurate than equivalent figures from other parts of Egypt and elsewhere in Africa. This is because of the lineal distribution of cultivated land and nucleated Nubian settlements along the banks of the Nile that facilitates measurement and enumeration. Furthermore, the

development of the Aswan Dam required accurate statistics on three occasions in connection with population resettlement and compensation of those whose gardens were inundated.

From the census data it is possible to determine sex ratios (that is the proportion of males of all ages to 100 females) for each *'umudiya* and the three linguistic regions. While it is not possible to compute accurate labor migration rates from these, I have assumed that differences in sex ratios between different Nubian communities at the same date reflect variations in labor migration rates. While other factors are presumably involved, I have assumed that these are either constant or secondary in importance.<sup>9</sup>

With less confidence I have also applied the assumption that sex ratio differences reflect variation in labor migration rates to the same community at different time intervals during the past eighty years. While the possibility of other factors (and particularly unknown changes in the age structure of the populations concerned) influencing the situation is greater over this time period, still it is extremely unlikely that they are sufficient in themselves to explain the magnitude of the changes referred to in the following paragraphs.

**Table 1: Population of the Kenuzi-speaking Region from 1881 to 1960**

Year	Total Population	Males	Females	Sex Ratio
1882	20,333	8,679	11,654	74
1897	25,542	10,148	15,457	65
1907	28,142	10,868	17,274	63
1917	26,129	8,845	17,284	51
1927	24,137	7,245	16,892	43
1937	24,132	7,708	16,424	47
1947	17,906	5,293	12,613	42
1960	17,230	5,603	11,627	48

*Note:* The nineteenth-century figures are probably less reliable than the twentieth-century ones, the 1882 census occurring during the year of the British invasion of Egypt and the 1897 one during the Anglo-Egyptian reconquest of the Sudan.

According to Figure 1, the total population of the Kenuzi region from Dabud to al-Madiq increased from 20,333 in 1882 to 28,142 in 1907. It then fell from 28,142 to 17,230 between 1907 and 1960, a decrease of 39 percent as opposed to 23 percent for Egyptian Nubia as a whole.<sup>10</sup> During this same time period, the sex ratio discrepancy increased from 74 to below 50.<sup>11</sup> These figures indicate that population increase was curtailed not by the original construction of the Aswan Dam but rather by the Dam's first heightening in 1913. With the inundation of practically all of the remaining *saqiya* soils at that time, date palms, the most important Nubian crop, were drastically reduced in number, especially in those '*umudiyas* closest to the dam wall. In Dabud, for example, the number fell from over 11,000 just prior to the first heightening to under 400 prior to the second in 1933. During the same time period, they fell from over 14,000 to under 600 in Kalabsha, and from over 11,000 to under 500 in Maria. Although the sharpness of the decline decreased further upriver, loss in productivity was still significant, compensation being paid out for 9,376 palms in Sayalla, which is the next to last '*umudiya* in the southern portion of the Kenuzi-speaking region.<sup>12</sup>

While this reduction of exploitable resources undoubtedly set in motion a decline in total resident population, it is impossible to know what proportion of the 1907–60 decrease represents permanent migration as opposed to labor migration. Presumably the decrease in females from 17,274 to 11,627 (a drop of 33 percent) is due in part to permanent migration. On the other hand, a decrease in the total male population of 48 percent and a widening of the sex ratio discrepancy from 63 to below 50 indicates that as land resources were inundated, labor migration rates also increased. That this increase was accelerated rather than initiated by the development of the Aswan Dam is suggested by the widening of the sex ratio discrepancy from 74 in 1882 to 65 in 1897. Presumably even before the completion of the Dam in 1902, land pressure arising from population increase was forcing out an increasing proportion of productive males as labor migrants.

Although it is impossible to know how far back in time sex ratio differentials of this order of magnitude go, archaeologists postulate extensive cultivation during certain time periods on the basis of grave counts. More recently, but still prior to 1902, travelers referred to the Nubian practice of building their villages on infertile land, presumably to preserve the better land for cultivation.<sup>13</sup> Since the extension of cultivation to new lands was precluded owing to water lack during the millennium prior to the development of government pumping projects after 1933, land pressure during periods of

population buildup was probably a major factor behind early Nubian migrations away from the Nile in the Sudan and north into Egypt.

In regard to both permanent migration and labor migration the situation in the Kenuzi area is at its clearest through 1927. Thereafter the total number of males appears to have actually increased between 1927–37 and 1947–60 while the sex ratio vacillated in the forties with a rise to 48 in 1960. The major reason behind such vacillations is probably the development of government pumping projects, there being no such projects in Egyptian Nubia prior to the second heightening of the Dam in 1933. The first three projects developed thereafter in the Kenuzi area were ‘Allaqi (approximately 730 feddans cultivable only during the winter season), Lower Kurta (approximately six hundred feddans cultivable only during the summer season) and al-Dakka (approximately six hundred feddans under perennial cultivation). Between 1948 and 1954 the ‘Allaqi project was further developed to support perennial cultivation while six hundred more feddans under perennial cultivation were brought into use in al-Dakka, raising the total to 1,200 feddans.

While the residents of only three of the seventeen Kenuzi *‘umudiyas* had easy access to these projects, they contained over two-thirds of the cultivable land. In response to this increase in available land resources, the total population of al-Dakka nearly tripled between 1907 and 1960, the same time period during which the population of the Kenuzi area as a whole decreased by 39 percent. Taking the three project *‘umudiyas*, all of them increased their total male population between 1927–37, the actual increase accounting for slightly over 60 percent of the increment for the Kenuzi area during that ten-year period. During the 1947–60 period the total increase in the al-Dakka male population alone exceeded the increment for the entire Kenuzi area.<sup>14</sup>

Just as project development in these three *‘umudiyas* clarifies fluctuations in the total male population of the Kenuzi area after 1927, so also does it clarify fluctuations in the sex ratio. For throughout the period 1927–60, the divergence in the al-Dakka sex ratio was narrowing, with the gap falling fastest during the years 1927–37 (57 to 64) and 1949–60 (68 to 76).

While analysis of the 1882–60 figures for the Kenuzi area suggests a close correlation between the extent and nature of available agricultural resources and sex ratios, this correlation is much clearer when the Kenuzi- and Mahasi-speaking region and different *‘umudiyas* throughout Egyptian Nubia are compared at the same point in time.<sup>15</sup> These comparisons show very clearly that as per capita land resources decrease, the sex ratio discrepancy and hence labor migration rates increase.

In 1927, the sex ratio in the Kenuzi-speaking region was 43 as opposed to 56 in the Mahasi-speaking region. According to the Agricultural Census for 1929, the individually owned (but not necessarily cultivated) per capita land resources in the former region was 0.25 feddans as opposed to 0.42 in the latter. In reality the contrast in agricultural resources was even greater than these figures indicate since the northernmost Kenuzi *'umudiyas* lost almost all their palms after the 1913 heightening while the southernmost Mahasi *'umudiyas* lost none.

On the other hand, the 1927 Mahasi sex ration of 56 (like the 1882 and 1897 Kenuzi figures) is of interest since it is still low enough to indicate a high labor migrancy rate prior to the serious encroachment of reservoir water. The same applies to a sex ratio of 64 for al-Dirr province (which extended from Kalabsha in the Kenuzi area to the Sudanese border) in 1897. Returning to the time period 1907–27, the sex ratio in Adindan (which was yet to be influenced by the Dam) ranged between 63 and 55 as opposed to resident per capita land holdings varying between 0.36 and 0.31 feddans.<sup>16</sup> This was hardly sufficient to support the population if all labor migrants and their dependents were to return home.

Figure 2 compares sex ratios and per capita availability of certain resource types in the eight *'umudiyas* from which I selected villages for more intensive study. The general picture is what we would expect on the basis of the preceding discussion. That is, the proportion of males to females increases significantly as per capita land resources increase. On the other hand, the range of variation between the four Kenuzi *'umudiyas*, the figure for al-Malki and Adindan, and the variation between the two pumping project *'umudiyas* of Tushka Gharb and Ballana underline the difficulty of trying to assess the relative importance of resource types even in a sub-subsistence economy. They also reveal the danger of placing too much emphasis on the quantification of resources, since the physical, sociological, and cultural conditions under which these resources are exploited can vary from area to area.

The land resource figures for the four Kenuzi *'umudiyas* and al-Malki do not include land available for summer cultivation. This land is inundated during the winter season when water is stored with the Aswan Dam reservoir. In late spring the flood gates are opened and land between the 121 and 110 meter levels gradually becomes exposed. The cultivation season for this land, however, and especially for the land below 115 meters, is short. In fact, during most years, it is too short for the cultivation of traditional grain crops, the sluice gates being gradually closed after the peak of the Nile flood, with the water level in the reservoir again being raised. As a result, Nubians

**Table 2: 1960 Population and Resource Statistics for Eight Egyptian Nubian *'umudiyas***

<i>'umudiya</i>	Total Resident Population	Males	Females	Sex Ratio	Feddans/ capita	Palms/ capita
Dabud	1,222	393	830	47/100	0*	2.0
Kalabsha	593	180	413	44	0*	2.7
Maria	328	88	240	37	0*	6.0
Sayalla	824	235	589	40	0*	2.7
al-Malki	1,564	548	1,016	54	0*	2.5
Tushka Gharb	1,969	756	1,213	64	0.49	8.8
Ballana	5,300	2,415	2,885	84	0.64	49.1
Adindan	1,876	668	1,208	55	0.21	40.9

\*Figure does not include inundated land cultivated during the short summer season (see below).

*Source:* Based on figures supplied by the Ministry of Social Affairs. The first four *'umudiyas* are Kenuz, the last three Mahas, and al-Malki is Arab.

concentrate on fodder and cucurbits. Even these may be lost in years of early and heavy flooding for then some sluice gates are closed immediately as a flood control measure with the water level rising rapidly over the lower alluvia. One such year was 1961. According to the *'umda* of Dabud, he lost his entire summer crop of melons—approximately seven feddans, while the *'umda* of Maria correlated total crop losses with the floods of 1961, 1958, and 1954. On the heels of too short a growing season for cereals, the effect such periodic 'total loss' floods on the morale of the Nubian farmer has been considerable. Discussing the final abandonment of summer *saqiya*s in Maria in the 1940s (throughout the Kenuzi area none were functioning to my knowledge in 1962), the *'umda* emphasized the despair of flood-struck cultivators. Marginal resources to start with because of the short growing season, these lands lost whatever value they might otherwise have held as far as Kenuzi men were concerned because of the additional risk of periodic years of total crop loss.

On the other hand, summer alluvia are still cultivated by some Kenuzi women and older men, especially where there are extensive deposits of higher silts (between 115 and 120 meters) with a longer growing season. While this situation does not have much influence on labor migration rates, it would widen the sex ratio discrepancy if it kept women in Nubia who might otherwise join their husbands or other male relatives in Cairo and other urban centers. Though there is less evidence to support the hypothesis, what I am suggesting is that if a Kenuzi woman has access to sizable summer land holdings by Nubian standards, the chances are greater that she will remain in Nubia rather than join male relatives in the city. Though such a woman is still dependent on remittances from labor migrants, she is nonetheless a greater economic asset to her family if she remains in Nubia than would be the case if she moved to the city. Here though adequate, the Nubian standard of living is sufficiently low that most wage earners can ill afford to support otherwise productive family members on an unproductive basis. As for Kenuzi women with comparatively little land to cultivate during the summer season, they are more apt to join their husbands in urban centers. This contrast is illustrated by the villages of Sharif el Din in Maria and Magid Kouli in Kalabsha. In both there are no resident post-pubescent males, there being virtually no land available for winter cultivation. On the other hand, over 50 percent of the married women identified with Sharif el Din are resident in the village as opposed to under 25 percent in Magid Kouli. The former village has access to extensive summer alluvia in an adjacent *khôr*, whereas the summer deposits of the latter are restricted to a very narrow band along the Nile and two small wadis. Examination of summer alluvia on aerial photographs taken in September (when the sluices are open) shows that in general the summer land resources of Maria are more extensive than in Kalabsha. If actually correlated with the proportion of women absent, this variation in per capita land resources for summer cultivation (for the resident population of Maria is smaller than that of Kalabsha) might be partially responsible for the variation in sex ratios between these two *'umudiya*s.<sup>17</sup>

The sex ratio variation between Dabud and Maria is even more extreme than in the Maria–Kalabsha case. Though the same argument might apply since the per capita summer alluvia of Dabud are even more restricted, in fact there is a greater proportion of resident men in Dabud villages than in the Maria ones, which hardly correlates with available agricultural resources. The probable answer is that these men are exploiting other resources, which dominate the economy of Egyptian Nubia as a whole.

Lying adjacent to Shallal, the northernmost Dabud villages fall within the outermost fringe of the peri-urban area of Aswan township. According to our informants, some men in this area commuted to Aswan, regularly returning on certain days each week. Another resource stressed was Nile transport and commerce. At least for the past hundred years, and probably long before, the Nubian residents of the cataract region have been well known for their boatmanship, both in guiding boats through rapid cataract waters, and in navigating throughout Nubia and Egypt. Like Shallal, Dabud falls within the region of the First Cataract. The largest village is Diptoud and there we were told that Dabud people were sailors, our chief informant noting that he himself had worked for thirty-six years on a felucca sailing between Shallal and Halfa. When the express boat of the Sudanese railways steamed by, he noted that the captain was from Diptoud while many of the crew were from the *'umudiya*. In his opinion there was little doubt that the people of Shallal and Dabud were the best boatmen in Egyptian Nubia. In fact he said that the most skilled boatmen in the second cataract area were originally from the first while other local boatmen had penetrated as far south as Dongola.

Nile transport and commerce is also important at Bab Kalabsha where the river had eroded its channel through a tongue of granitic formations. The captain of the felucca we hired was from this region, and when we visited his village (Darmous in the *'umudiya* of Kalabsha) on a later occasion, we found twenty men present along with five felucca sailing boats. One of these belonged to our captain and was undergoing extensive renovation. Though the agricultural resources of this village were insignificant, it is the only Kalabsha village listed in the 1960 census with a resident population composed of more males, the sex ratio being 122.

Moving upriver to the Arabic-speaking region, the figures from al-Malki require explanation as do those for the other five Arab *'umudiyas* and especially the three southernmost. The sex ratios of the three northernmost are 37 (Sebua), 46 (Wadi al-Arab), and 47 for Shaturma as opposed to 54 for al-Malki, 60 for Sinkari and 62 for Korosko to the south. Sebua is concentrated on the west bank of the Nile in an area of severe dune encroachment, with several villages literally surrounded by sand. The land resources here are virtually nil throughout the year. Though the other two northern *'umudiyas* have access to some summer alluvia, the amount per capita is less than in the three southern *'umudiyas*. Of them, al-Malki (the largest Arab *'umudiya*) is focused on extensive alluvial deposits within a sweeping bend of the Nile, while the villages of Sinkari and Korosko (the two smallest Arab *'umudiyas*)

are focused on alluvial deposits in the mouths of several *kbors*. These are far enough above the dam site to be revealed in portion as soon as the water level begins to recede and are available for a longer growing season than downriver in the Kenuzi area. On the other hand, while the variations in sex ratios between the different Arab *'umudiyas* can be explained in terms of land resource availability, the relatively high (under Nubian conditions) proportion of males to females in the three southernmost *'umudiyas* requires further explanation, especially when compared with the situation in Mahasi-speaking *'umudiyas* like Adindan still farther south.

Though I am least familiar with the population and physical environment of this Arab area (having concentrated on the Nubian-speaking populations which compose over 90 percent of the inhabitants from Shallal to the Sudanese border), it is possible that sex ratios are influenced by the fact that Korosko was the northern terminus of the formerly important caravan route to Abu Hamed in the Sudan. It is also possible that cultural factors are involved. Ethnically distinct from their Nubian-speaking neighbors, the inhabitants of the Arab area may have a different attitude toward the relative marginality of agricultural resources. Resources that Nubian men might either ignore or leave to their women, Arab men may be willing to cultivate themselves. The problem, if it exists, is one of different value orientations having an effect on labor migration rates in a sub-subsistence economy just as in an adequate subsistence one. In the former, however, the effect is limited since the nature of the local exploitable resources demands an economic response that, on a self-help basis, can only be realized in an external habitat. Irrespective of cultural factors, or whatever other factors may be at work, the Sebua Arabs have one of the highest labor migration rates in Nubia and hence in Africa. While al-Malki men, with more leeway for choice, may put more emphasis on cultivating marginal resources and less on wage labor in Cairo or elsewhere, labor migration rates throughout the Arab area are still high in cross-cultural perspective and, like those of the Nubian-speaking population, respond in the same way to variations in per capita land resources. And there, because of lack of knowledge, the matter must rest for the present.

The last three *'umudiyas* listed in Figure 2 are in the Mahasi-speaking region. Of these, both Tushka Gharb and Ballana contain pumping projects, the development of which was responsible for an increase in total population between 1907 and 1960. During this period the Tushka Gharb population nearly doubled while the Ballana population more than tripled. The proportion of males to 100 females increased in both cases, from 51 to 64 at Tushka

Gharb and from 61 to 84 at Ballana. Once again, however, the per capita land resource figures for the resident populations do not accurately show the nature of the land resources involved. In Ballana practically all the cultivable land is under perennial irrigation whereas over half of the Tushka Gharb land (including the entire project) can only be cultivated during the summer season. Hence in terms of land productivity per annum, the discrepancy in land resources is even greater between these two *'umudiya*s than the per capita land resource figures indicate. This, plus the discrepancy in the number of palms per capita, helps explain the higher proportion of resident Ballana males.<sup>18</sup> Ballana also has a larger and denser population, the needs of which have attracted more specialist services (shops, tea houses, butcheries, and so on) as well as government attention (schools, medical facilities, and so on).

The nearest to the Sudanese border, the non-project *'umudiya* of Adindan was the least affected by the development of the Aswan Dam, with less than 25 percent of its cultivable land inundated during the winter season after the dam's second heightening in 1933. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, resident per capita land resources were as low as 0.36 feddans as far back as 1907 in spite of a high labor migration rate. In other words, by then the available land resources were insufficient to support the population identified with the *'umudiya* and were supplemented by the earnings of labor migrants. Since then both the population and the proportion of males to females has remained relatively constant, the sharpest fluctuation occurring between 1937 and 1947 when the total number of men decreased by 17 percent and of women by 6 percent, presumably in response to the second heightening of the Dam. This suggests that the Adindan population has reached a balance between the exploitation of local resources and wage labor, with increase in population being drawn off by permanent emigration.<sup>19</sup>

In comparison with Ballana, the Adindan figure for palms per resident is deceptively high. Whereas most of the land in Ballana has been developed during the past thirty years, the same alluvial deposits in Adindan have probably been cultivated for hundreds of years, if not millennia. Because of Islamic inheritance, these are excessively subdivided today while rights in individual palms are vested in several heirs. Though many of these are absent in urban centers, an unknown proportion still insist on receiving their legitimate share, with the result that Adindan residents have less access to the produce of local palms than do Ballana residents.

## Conclusion

Prior to Nubian relocation in connection with the Aswan High Dam, increases in labor migration rates were closely correlated with decreases in per capita land resources. This statement applies not only to the same community or communities over time, but also to different communities at the same time. In this sense, the Nubian situation is yet another example of the economic motivation of labor migration. On the other hand, while African labor migrancy appears to be primarily a means to maintain the shaky economic base of a preferred rural society, with rates dropping following local development, it remains to be seen what proportion of Nubian wage laborers decide to rejoin their families in the resettlement areas. Since most of those eligible for relocation have worked in the cities for long periods of time, where they have established closer ties with urbanized Nubians who no longer maintain rural homes, it is possible that the majority are close to that stage in the urbanization process when people are no longer willing to spend their productive lives working the land, irrespective of the economic inducements offered. Whatever the outcome, it is likely to be influenced by government policy. If this requires Nubians to work compensation lands themselves as a necessary condition of ownership, and to submit to careful government supervision in the use of irrigation water, the response is quite unpredictable. On the other hand, if Nubians are permitted to hire laborers or establish share-croppers from among land-starved Sa'idis, I would expect many men to attempt maximization of their earning power by remaining in urban employment, with some moving to the relocation areas so that they could commute between New Nubia and the city of Kom Ombo. In order to learn what in fact does happen and to attempt an analysis of future events, it is of great importance that the communities and households studied prior to relocation be periodically restudied.

## Notes

- 1 The editors of this collection have omitted certain passages referring to the labor migration situation in Africa.
- 2 The research on which this paper is based was carried out primarily from September 1961 to September 1962 while I was associated with the American University in Cairo's Social Research Center. I am indebted to Harvard University's Center for Middle Eastern Studies for a research fellowship which enabled me to prepare this paper, to my research assistants Wafiya Mishriki and Abdul Hamid el Zein for gathering and translating most of the Egyptian census material, and to Mr. Francisco Benet, Dr. Robert Fernea, Dr. Saad

Gadalla, Dr. Peter Geiser, Dr. Philip Gulliver, Dr. John Kennedy, Mr. D.W. Lockard, Dr. J. Clyde Mitchell and Dr. Kawthar Abdel Rasoul for their helpful comments on the paper's subject material.

- 3 I am indebted to Mr. A.E. Fareed for these calculations.
- 4 At least one village on the western bank (Koudi in the Dabud district) has been deserted during the past thirty years because of dune encroachment while many observers have commented on fresh layers of sand in gardens following heavy winds.
- 5 Within Egyptian Nubia, the Kenuzi-speaking region extends 145 km upriver from the dam site, the Arabic-speaking region from 145 km to 183 km, and the Mahasi-speaking region from 183 km to 310 km at the Sudanese border.
- 6 This was also the case with the fourth *saqiya*, which belonged to the sole male resident of the village and his two sisters. They had built the device in 1944 (using Sa'idi laborers) with money inherited from their father. Operations were stopped in 1960 because the *saqiya* broke down and the partners were not able to afford the estimated LE250 for repairs.
- 7 The Egyptian Nubian figure is derived from the 1950 and 1960 Nubian Agricultural Surveys and the 1960 population total quoted by the Ministry of Social Affairs. The Upper and Lower Egyptian figures are included in the 1960 International Labour Organization Labour Survey for North Africa.
- 8 The Census of 1957 unfortunately was postponed until 1960.
- 9 Since Nubian women do not as yet seek wage labor, we need not worry about regional variations in female labor migrancy rates influencing sex ratios. While there are local variations in the numbers of women and children accompanying their husbands and other male kin to work, these variations are themselves influenced by labor migrancy. That is, as rates increase so also does the proportion of absentee dependents, which tends to decrease the magnitude of sex ratio differentials rather than widen them and hence does not invalidate our assumption that those differences which do occur indicate regional variations in labor migrancy systems. There may, however, be considerable difference in the proportion of women and children absent from certain Kenuzi-speaking village and *'umudiya*s with labor migration rates above 90 percent (see below). Where this proportion has remained relatively low as in the Maria village of Sharif al-Din, this could widen the sex ratio discrepancy without influencing labor migration rates. Accordingly Nubian sex ratios below 50 should be considered less sensitive indicators of local variations in very high labor migration rates.
- 10 Unless specified, population statistics do not include the northernmost Nubian *'umudiya* of Shallal which falls within the peri-urban area of Aswan. Because of the immigration of an unknown number of Sa'idis from Upper

Egypt after 1933, the decrease in the Kenuzi-speaking population since 1937 is greater than the figures indicate.

- 11 On the basis of a rough estimate, sex ratios lower than 50 are indicative of labor migrancy rates exceeding 85 percent.
- 12 Figures courtesy of the Ministry of Social Affairs. The Sayalla figure for just prior to the second heightening was 9,095 palms. Since the figures given above related only to palms on land for which compensation was given owing to inundation, and since palms can withstand shallow flooding for years (though yields are reduced), it is not possible to know how many of the Sayalla palms recorded for compensation purposes prior to the second heightening were the same as those listed before 1913. This is not a problem in the northern Kenuzi *'umudiyas* since flooding after the first heightening was deep enough to kill over 95 percent of the total palms.
- 13 Burckhardt (1822:103), however, does not relate this practice to broad flood plains but rather only to areas of restricted alluvia.
- 14 An unknown proportion of this increase was due to Sa'idi immigration. Although Sa'idi immigrants were not permitted to own project land, they were attracted by employment and share-cropping possibilities. While this influx shows that project development created new economic opportunities which Nubians could have but did not exploit, it should be stressed that the first project did not begin operating until several years after the second heightening of the Dam in 1933. In other words, projects did not offer an economic alternative at the time when the second heightening drastically reduced Nubian agricultural resources. While we suspect that labor migration rates did drop among the Nubian-speaking population of those *'umudiyas* in which projects subsequently developed (especially in the Mahasi-speaking regions) landless Nubians prefer urban employment to agricultural wage labor. As to absentee Nubian land owners, conceivably they maximize their income by establishing share-croppers while they themselves remain in urban employment.
- 15 For an analysis of the situation in the Arabic-speaking region, see below.
- 16 On the basis of aerial photo interpretation, I estimate that Adindan residents had access to approximately six hundred feddans prior to the second heightening of the Dam.
- 17 Also of probable significance is the fact that one Kalabsha village (Darmous) actually has more resident males than females (see below).
- 18 After the second heightening of the Aswan Dam in 1933, a large majority of Tushka palms were inundated as opposed to only a minority of those in Ballana. The total number in Tushka in 1960 was only 17,385 as opposed to 260,624 in Ballana.

- 19 There is no reason to believe that the rate of natural increase among the Adindan population is significantly less than the 38.4/1000 reported in 1955 for the Sudanese Nubian population of Halfa District (1st Interim Report of the 1955/6 Sudanese census).

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# Some Differential Factors Affecting Population Movement

## The Nubian Case

Peter Geiser\*

This paper is an analysis of selected aspects of population movement, with special reference to the case of Nubia. It examines a portion of the data collected in the years 1961–64 during the course of an anthropological–sociological study of Nubian society, including both the villages of Egyptian Nubia and the urban communities of Egypt and the Sudan. Specifically, the paper describes the Nubian community in historical perspective, sketching out some of the salient geographic, economic, and demographic features. The empirical data are analyzed with reference to a selected theory of migration phenomena.

[. . .]

The 1960 Egyptian census gives Lower Nubia a population of 16,861 families composed of 48,028 persons. Of these persons, 17,785 are males and 30,243 are females. Figure 1 shows the distribution of the village population by sex and age structure compared with those of Egypt as a whole.

The remarkable indications from the comparison are the absence of middle-aged males from the villages, a relatively high proportion of older females, and a relatively low proportion of children in the younger age categories. These observations can be further refined with additional census

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\*An earlier version of this paper appeared in *Human Organization* 26, no. 3 (1967): 164–77. Copyright © 1967 Society for Applied Anthropology. Reproduced by permission.

data. Relatively few of the males are divorced or widowed, although almost one half of the females fall into this status. A somewhat smaller proportion of females than males are single.<sup>1</sup>

[. . .]

In analyzing the demographic data with reference to the village populations several conclusions become apparent. A relatively large proportion of males, upon achieving adulthood at about the age of fifteen, leave the villages. While some of these return in their later years, it is likely that today most males leave permanently. From observations in Nubia, it seems that there are selective factors operating in respect to those who do return. The older male population in the villages appears to include a relatively high proportion of those who are mentally and physically incapacitated. The high proportion of the widowed and divorced among village women also suggests selective factors in regard to this phenomenon. The implication is that the Nubian village is a kind of refuge for both men and women who, in regard to city life, have become marginal in social and economic terms. The age pyramid suggests a relatively low degree of fertility. The fertility ratio of Lower Nubia is 479 compared to 729 for Egypt as a whole. These data, together with other data to be referred to later, suggest that the local population is barely self-sustaining.<sup>2</sup>

### **The Urban Nubian**

[. . .]

Many impressions currently exist as to the social and demographic structure of Nubian life in the urban areas. One predominant impression is that the Nubian male is a migrant laborer, spending much of his working life in the city, and toward the end of his life span returning to the village to die. As a migrant laborer, he is believed to leave his wife and younger children in Nubia, coming to the city only because of the failure of the land to support the indigenous population, and returning to the village every year or two for visits. It is supposed that when he comes to the city, he continues his village relationships through the media of his village associations located in the city. Through the association he is continuously supplied with news concerning the happenings in the village, and by means of the instrumental function of association he carries out his special obligations in regard to the events of the life cycle involving birth, marriage, and death. The general impression exists that the Nubian's employment is almost exclusively within the service occupations. These occupations are thought of predominantly as cook, *barwab* (doorkeeper), houseboy, and waiter. It is said that his basic characteristics of

honesty and cleanliness account for the frequency with which his services are sought in carrying out responsibilities in private Cairo households.

It is commonly held in Cairo that the urban Nubian performs the duties required of him by family and tribal tradition, including significant and regular monetary contributions for the support of his family in Nubia. Should the Nubian fail to meet these or similar obligations, he would be thought of as 'dead'—banished from the hearts, minds, and physical presence of his family and village compatriots.

In order to test some of these assumptions and to extend the enquiry into other areas of the Nubian's urban life, a survey was made of the representative sample of Cairo Nubian households in the years 1961–62.<sup>3</sup> From our data we estimated the total Cairo Nubian population to approximate 13,000 family units containing a total of 48,000 persons. In addition to those living in Cairo, we estimated that an additional 24,000 Nubians live elsewhere in Egypt, in the Sudan, or in other countries. Thus in addition to the approximately 48,000 persons living in Nubia, we estimated that approximately 70,000 Nubians made their immediate residences outside Nubia.<sup>4</sup> The major communities of residence outside Nubia appeared to be Cairo, Alexandria, Aswan, and various places in the Sudan, in that order. A few of the findings from the urban study may assist in describing Cairo Nubians and are probably applicable to Nubians resident in other urban areas as well.

First, a significant majority of married males maintain their center of life in the city.<sup>5</sup> Not only are these persons accompanied by their spouses and children, but they are surrounded in the city by other household units from the extended family of which they are a part. Second, the Nubian households where both parents are present in Cairo are constructed in numbers and degrees of relationship characteristic of the generally prevailing pattern of city family life.<sup>6</sup> In general, the Nubian household is composed of husband, wife, and their unmarried minor children. Only infrequently are other members of the extended family present in the Cairo household.<sup>7</sup>

The larger proportion of the Nubian working population (84 percent) is employed in service occupations. Nubians are employed as waiters, messengers, *bawwabs*, and cooks (26 percent, 24 percent, 14 percent, and 10 percent, respectively). Contrary to many current impressions, the Nubian's employment is not principally domestically connected. To the extent that Burckhardt's and Lane's impressions represented an accurate statement of the Nubian's early nineteenth century occupations, his occupational activities have shifted considerably since that time.<sup>8</sup>

Although it is a commonly held impression that the Nubian returns to this village for visits at intervals of each year or two, our study does not bear out this belief. We find that the Nubian living in Cairo typically visits Nubia about once every ten years. There is a somewhat greater frequency in the visitations of those who maintain their wives and children in Nubia.

It appears that the Nubian living in the city continues to meet certain tribal obligations, particularly those related to economic support of village relatives. The degree to which these obligations are met is commensurate with the closeness of the relationship. The married male with his wife and children in the village appears to be most faithful in providing support to family members in Nubia. In addition to obligations of support, the urban Nubian participates to a considerable extent in ceremonial activities regarding the events of birth, marriage, and death within city and village although there is some variation in commitment to these practices. The religion of the Nubian is universally Muslim.

### **Nubian Migration in Historical Perspective**

With this brief description of Nubian history and the Nubian's current status in village and urban life, we should now like to examine some of the features of population movement within the recent past. We should also like to relate the flow of migration to certain differentials in the economic, social, and spatial conditions affecting the Nubian population for the purpose of demonstrating, if possible, regularities concerning the operation of these phenomena.

During the recent historical past, which is to say since 1800, Lower Nubia appears to have had a relatively stable population of about 50,000 persons. Burckhardt in 1813 estimated the total population between Aswan and Dongola to be approximately 100,000.<sup>9</sup> Herzog quotes Prokosch-Osten, a traveler in Nubia during the second quarter of the nineteenth century, as estimating the Nubian population between Aswan and Wadi Halfa as not exceeding 50,000 persons.<sup>10</sup> The Egyptian census of 1907 gave the population of al-Dirr *markaz* (Governorate of Lower Nubia) to be 57,576. The 1960 Egyptian census gave the population of Lower Nubia as 48,028. Census data on Lower Nubia have been available since 1882. The census years and the numbers of persons in the sample *nabias* are given in Table 1.

The table (allowing for some inaccuracy in population counts over three-quarters of a century) shows the population to be relatively stable up to 1937.<sup>11</sup> The somewhat low sex ratios over the whole period during which censuses have been taken, together with the observations of travelers, suggest a long history of migration.<sup>12</sup>

**Table 1: Population of Thirteen  
Sample *Nahias* by Sex and Census Year**

Year Ratio	Total	Males	Females	Sex
1882	15,521	5,985	9,536	.63
1897	22,606	8,660	13,946	.62
1907	24,154	8,804	15,350	.57
1917	22,973	8,512	14,461	.59
1927	22,494	7,136	15,358	.46
1937	23,347	7,861	15,486	.51
1947	16,651	4,980	11,671	.43
1960	14,679	5,294	9,385	.56

One question of interest is whether the construction of the first Aswan Dam in 1903 and its heightening in 1912 and 1933 increased emigration from the affected areas of Nubia. Residents of the *nabia* of Dahmit, located about twenty-five kilometers south of Aswan, are reported by Callender to have believed that urban migration was occasioned by the construction of the dam.<sup>13</sup> A common explanation given by urban Nubians for their migration is that the construction and elevation of the Aswan Dam forced them to leave the country to which they are dedicated and to which they long to return. No explanation is offered as to why the migrants must rationalize their migrating behavior, which contradicts the ubiquitous impressions regarding the Nubians' love of country.

Table 2 shows the sample *nabias*, their distances south of the dam, the year their lands were flooded, and the sex ratios by census years. It might be anticipated that had the flooding created a substantial disruption in the economy, this fact would have been reflected in a decline in the sex ratios of the affected *nabias* during the years immediately following the flooding. A careful examination of Table 2 presents what appears to be an equivocal answer to this question. It seems clear that the migration of males from Nubia (as implied by the low sex ratios established from the census data) was a fact long before the building of the dam. While it is true that the sex ratios for these *nabias* dropped following the construction of the dam, the sex ratios also dropped in *nabias* farther to the south which were unaffected by the flooding.<sup>14</sup>

**Table 2: Relation between Sex Ratios and the Effects of Construction of the Aswan Dam**

<i>Nabia</i>	Km. from the dam	Date flooding began			Sex Ratios by census years							
		11/03	2/13	1/38	82	97	07	17	27	37	47	60
Total					.63	.62	.57	.59	.46	.51	.43	.56
Dabud	5				.64	.59	.58	.50	.39	.53	.42	.52
Kalabsha	50				.67	.69	.55	.49	.32	.41	.39	.64
Maria	80				.88	.75	.71	.57	.44	.49	.40	.44
Kashtumna Gharb	95				.74	.73	.67	.49	.43	.55	.45	.59
Qurta	115				.79	.62	.67	.90	.40	.44	.34	.45
Sayalla	130				.53	.65	.58	.51	.49	.60	.43	.43
Wadi al-Arab	165				*	.53	.51	.60	.45	.42	.37	.48
al-Malki	175				*	.87	.66	.66	.52	.54	.44	.52
Abu Handal	205				.70	.58	.52	.63	.50	.66	.47	.52
Tumas wa Afa	220				.49	.56	.53	.54	.50	.52	.42	.65
al-Gineina wa-l-Shibbak	240				.50	.48	.49	.55	.51	.46	.40	.62
Tushka Gharb	250				.48	.56	.51	.56	.50	.58	.59	.66
Adindan	300				.69	.59	.59	.63	.54	.52	.46	.68

\*Not separately reported for 1882

We may conclude that the construction of the dam may have further unsettled the entire population of Lower Nubia even though, at the time, the dam did not physically affect land utilization in all of Lower Nubia. While labor migration had been a continuing phenomenon for a long period and was probably institutionalized in village society, the building of the dam very likely gave some further impetus to migration. In this view of Nubian history, it would be our conclusion that the dam's construction was of relatively little significance in accounting for migration and that any evaluation

of Nubian social life must include the idea of a well-institutionalized pattern of migrancy over a long period of time.

Aside from data concerning the volume of labor migration in various periods of Nubian history, it is difficult to accurately determine the qualitative changes in the pattern of migration. The impression seems well-founded that for centuries past the migrants were males, that they remained temporarily in the cities, and that following some years of stay in the city they returned permanently to the villages.<sup>15</sup> However, our data reveals that a new pattern of migration came into existence in the period prior to the beginning of the Second World War. This pattern is different in that for the migrating male the focus of family life has, to a considerable extent, shifted from the village to the city. In recent years an increasing proportion of males in the cities have been accompanied by their wives and children.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, there appear to be settlements of extended family units within particular communities of Egypt and the Sudan. The density of family unit settlements suggests that the traditional practices of extended family life may now be carried out almost wholly within the urban community.

### **Contemporary Patterns of Population Movement**

With this overview of Nubian history, we may describe some of the relatively current features of population flow and identify, if possible, some regularities associated with the accompanying social economic, social, and spatial conditions.

Following the work of Ravenstein, A. Weber, and others in the last century concerning the possibility of finding order in population movement, a number of studies have compared migration rates with distances between points of origin and places of destination.<sup>17</sup> A recurring hypothesis in these studies is that migration is a stage-by-stage phenomenon, with the volume of migration being inversely proportionate to the distance between points of origin and places of destination . . . . Our own data does not seem to support these contentions. We find no significant relationships between the volume of migration and distances between the points of origin and the places of destination.<sup>18</sup> Some scholars have placed the further condition on the general hypothesis that the rate of migration to a particular point of destination is affected by the number of intervening opportunities between the points of origin and the places of destination. Stouffer, for example, says that the "number of persons going a given distance is directly proportional to the number of opportunities at that distance and inversely proportional

to the number of intervening opportunities.”<sup>19</sup> We examined an aspect of this hypothesis through an analysis of data pertaining to the emigration of population from the *nabias* in the sample. Aswan was a point of intervening opportunity for each of the *nabias*. It might be supposed that Aswan would drain off some of the population otherwise going to Cairo, and the extent to which Aswan would be an attraction would relate to distances between it and the *nabias* of origin. We examined the question under this hypothesis: When a point of intervening opportunity exists, the number of migrants proceeding beyond it will be inversely proportional to the distance between the points of origin and the places of intervening opportunity. In other words, a place of intervening opportunity will increase its effects as the distance decreases between it and the points of origin.

Table 3 shows the comparative affinity of migrants for Cairo and for Aswan. The Index of Affinity represents the number of migrants going to a particular destination from the several points of origin when the volume of emigration from each *nabia* is held constant. When the attraction of Aswan is related to that of Cairo in reference to distance between Aswan and the *nabias*, we find no correlation to exist ( $r=0.0$ ). There appears to be no justification for saying that the attraction of Cairo is affected by differentials in distance from Aswan as a point of intervening opportunity, with one possible exception. The exception is that those *nabias* lying within about one hundred kilometers of Aswan definitely seem to be influenced by their proximity to that community. Migrants from Dabud, Kalabsha, Maria, and Kashtumna Gharb, representing all the *nabias* in the sample within this distance from Aswan, appear to be attracted to Aswan although they also go to Cairo in sizable numbers.

We offer the general conclusion that, given the conditions of a relatively great distance between the points of origin and places of destination and generally small differences in distance among the *nabias*, a relationship does not exist between the volume of migration and distance. We also conclude that except for the effects of Aswan upon nearby communities, its influence on Cairo as a point of attraction shows no relation to the distance between Aswan and the communities of origin.

The second proposition we tested is that the volume of out-migration is affected by the availability of arable land in the communities of origin. Stated as a hypothesis: The less the availability of arable land, the greater will be the volume of migration.

**Table 3: Index of Affinity of Migrants  
for Cairo and Aswan by *Nabias***

<i>Nabia</i>	Affinity for Cairo	Affinity for Aswan	Distance from Aswan (Km.)
Dabud	226	629	5
Kalabsha	1396	148	50
Maria	1563	128	80
Kashtumna			
Gharb	1611	154	95
Qurta	665	...	115
Sayalla	1774	21	130
Wadi al-Arab	2139	20	165
al-Malki	816	...	175
Abu Handal	3074	91	205
Tumas wa Afia	557	30	220
al-Gineina			
wa-l-Shibbak	1365	36	240
Tushka			
Gharb	651	53	250
Adindan	922	15	300

Index of Affinity computed from formula:

$$A_d = \frac{M_d P_t M_t}{100 P_n M_n}$$

- $A_d$ : Index of Affinity.  
 $M_d$ : Number of migrants to a particular place of destination from a particular *nabia*.  
 $M_t$ : Total number of migrants from all *nabias* to all places of destination.  
 $M_n$ : Total number of migrants to all places of destination from a particular *nabia*.  
 $P_t$ : Total population of all *nabias*.  
 $P_n$ : Population of a particular *nabia*.

In order to test this proposition, Cairo respondents were asked to state the number of feddans of land held by their families and the number of adult members in each. The respondents were identified in regard to the *nabias* from which they came. An index of per capita arable land holdings was constructed for each *nabha*. The volume of migration from these *nabias* to all places of destination was correlated with the index of land availability.<sup>20</sup> A positive correlation was found ( $r = .70$ ;  $p < .01$ ). When, however, the volume of migration to Cairo was related to the availability of arable land, no correlation appeared to exist ( $r = .12$ ;  $p > .05$ ). It appears from our study that lack of arable land is positively associated with high migration and may be considered a 'push factor' in the depopulation of Nubia.<sup>21</sup> One explanation of the differences in correlation between migration to Cairo and that to all points of destination may lie in the differentials in the 'pull' forces of the places of destination. The several attractions offered by the different places of destination may constitute selective factors in the final distributions of the migrant population. Such selectivity may modify the relative importance of any particular factor stimulating migration to a particular destination.

A third proposition examined was that the size of the community of origin would be related to the volume of migration. We believe that in the community of origin, differentials in the social structure, as reflected in the size of the population, may be related to population flow. As communities increase in size, an increase also occurs in the complexity of the division of labor. As the complexity in the division of labor increase, we think that interdependencies resistant to migration are created in roles and statuses. In larger communities roles and status are created beyond those of age and sex, and decisions to migrate are referable to the role and status structure of the community as well as to that of the immediate family. Hence the larger the community, the more pervasive its stabilizing influence upon population shifts. Students of population movement have observed that the volume of in-migration is also related to the size of the community of destination. The recurring conditions correlated with community size are those of degrees of specialization and the diversification of roles. Larger communities, by reason of specialization and the diversification of roles, are more attractive of in-migration and resistant to out-migration than smaller communities.

When the volume of migration was correlated with the sizes of the *nabha* populations, we found an inverse relationship ( $r = .63$ ;  $p < .05$ ). If, however, the sizes of the *nabha* populations are correlated with the volume of migration to Cairo, there is no relationship ( $r = .16$ ;  $p > .05$ ). We conclude, as in the instance of migration related to the availability of arable land, that the

size of the Nubian community of origin is related to the volume of out-migration, but that there are selective factors that channel the migration to particular places of destination.

Our findings suggest some of the difficulties in any attempt at a simplified explanation of population movement. The processes involved in a move toward migration must always take into account the relative advantages of a decision to stay or to leave. These processes generally include some consideration of the resources offered by the potential places of destination as well as the costs involved in making use of them. Then, too, forces operate out of an historical past to institutionalize migratory behaviors; often such historical factors have long since been forgotten.<sup>22</sup> These migratory behaviors may in turn reduce the potential for viability of the village community.<sup>23</sup> It was evident in our study that different destinations exercised different degrees of influence on the stream of migration from Nubian villages. There appeared to be differing affinities for the village migrants toward the urban communities of Egypt and the Sudan. Migratory populations of some *nabias* moved preponderantly to Cairo, others to Alexandria, while still others were divided between Egypt and the Sudan. The statistical findings on differential population flow were confirmed without reservation by the impressions of field staff working in the villages.

Table 4 shows the sample *nabias* and the indices of affinity for selected places of destination. A casual review of the table clearly shows the fact that the destinations are not randomly selected. A prime example is the case of al-Malki in respect to the heavy migratory flow to the Sudan. Al-Malki, located at a point along the Nile about 175 kilometers south of Aswan, lies just across the river from Korosko. During the last several centuries Korosko was the point of departure for caravans which, by going overland, eliminated the necessity of covering the distance of the great bend of the Nile. It was here that Kitchener took off from the Nile in his campaign against the Mahdi's uprising in the Sudan. Nubian families in the vicinity of Korosko were active in the trade that linked the African continent with the Middle East. Family members served as guards along the caravan route, and it seems highly probable that elements of these families took up residence along this route as far down as Khartoum. Subsequently, these settlements in the Sudan became ports of entry for the migrating family members, offering resources of housing, work, and psychological security for the potential migration of kin. Here the urban dweller, as in other places of destination, received in exchange the news of the village and the repeated opportunity for maintaining his social identity through service to the Nubian community.

**Table 4. Index of Affinity for Selected Communities by *Nahia***

<i>Nahia</i>	Places of Destination						
	Cairo	Alexandria	Aswan	Other Egyptian Cities	Other Nubia	Sudan	Other Countries
Dabud	226	405	629	104	51	25	...
Kalabsha	1396	25	146	653	51	244	51
Maria	1563	2603	128	429	...	...	...
Kashtumna Gharb	1611	27	154	30	15	...	71
Qurta	665	8	...	4	...	...	58
Sayalla	1774	112	21	3	...	91	3
Wadi al-Arab	2139	...	20	20	...	20	20
al-Malki	816	...	...	14	...	491	...
Abu Handal	3074	340	91	425	...	...	32
Tumas wa Afia	557	277	30	20	...	34	...
al-Gineina wa-l-Shibbak	1365	42	36	97	114	20	...
Tushka Gharb	651	298	53	10	10	32	10
Adindan	922	15	15	62	70	39	...

Another example of a selective pattern of population dispersal is illustrated by the case of Kalabsha. It is probably not accidental that Kalabsha shows a dispersal pattern which includes a number of communities as places of destination. This *nahia* is located at Bab Kalabsha where the Nile is constrained between perpendicular walls of rock and little arable land exists.<sup>24</sup> Kalabsha is a center of boat building in Nubia. Contrary to the general occupational pattern in Nubia, the principal occupations of employed males in Kalabsha are the building trades, transport, and communication. (45%).

We analyzed the occupations of employed males in the sample *nahias*. Overall 57% are employed in agriculture. Approximately two-thirds of the Kalabsha males are employed in trade, transportation, and in skilled and unskilled labor as compared with the next highest *nahia*, Dabud, with 18

percent of male workers in these occupations. The boat building trade and transport industry of Kalabsha appear to be factors in the relatively wide dispersal of that migrant population. Dabud, on the periphery of Aswan, supplies that city with a relatively large number of service workers. Some of those who maintain their homes in Dabud commute the five kilometers to work in Aswan. Sayalla, an outpost of the camel corps of Egyptian police, provides occupational opportunities in both transport and service, and shows a rather large migration to the Sudan.

## **Conclusion**

In this paper we have evaluated selected findings from a study of population movement in present-day Nubia against its historical background. We have analyzed our findings with reference to several theories and hypotheses concerning migration phenomena. In general, the Nubian migration pattern appears to develop out of a complex of historical, social, institutional, economic, and spatial factors. It does not seem possible to explain satisfactorily the migration pattern with reference to any single push or pull factor.

One of the noteworthy findings of the analysis is that great variation exists in the Nubian village social and economic structure as well as in the pattern of migration. Taken as a whole, Nubia very likely represents a wide variety of economic and social behaviors that may be as differentiated as the linguistic bases distinguishing the three regions of Nubia.

This variety of Nubian social life is eventually reflected in how, when, and under what circumstances migration takes place. These reflections may be found in the following areas:

## **Historical Background**

Historical events, some long since forgotten, have continued to differentiate population flow in quantity and in respect to the potential places of destination. Labor migration of significant proportions has very likely been a regular part of Nubian social and economic life over at least three centuries. Both trade and warfare have affected the flow of population in the past. Today, developing technology, urbanization, and industrialization appear to be markedly changing the nature of the past pattern of migration. It seems clear that proportionately more Nubians are migrating to the cities under conditions which include all members of the nuclear household in the migration. Considering the widespread dispersal of the Nubian population in relatively large numbers, the village would seem to represent the focus of life today mainly in terms of sentiment and as a source of social identity.

### **Institutionalized Patterns of Migration Behavior**

The Nubian male over many generations had been expected to spend part of his working life in the city. At about age fifteen it was expected that he would join members of the extended family in the urban centers and work for varying lengths of time until he could accumulate enough money to marry and eventually return permanently to the village. There is a circular effect to the phenomenon of institutionalized migration behavior, which may have had some of its origins in the poverty of the land. The resultant economic structure may have attained an equilibrium within Nubia at a lesser position than at its economic potential. Institutionalized migration behavior as a separate force in Nubian social life may have reduced a needed labor supply and may have been a factor in further weakening the indigenous economy. It is reasonable to conclude that the building of the first dam at Aswan may have increased migration, although it seems excessive to consider it a substantial factor in inducing migration behavior.

### **Variations in the Demographic Structure of Nubia**

Significant variations in the age, sex, economic, and occupational structures of Nubia differentially affected the volume of migration from the several *nabias* and to the places of destination. Limited land resources in Nubia appear to be a factor in producing migrants. The direction of migration, however, is influenced to some extent by the competing attractions of cities, by differing resources in potential places of destination, and by historical events relating Nubia to other parts of the Middle East.

Finally, the long-term and apparent worldwide trend of rural-to-urban population displacement is at work in Egypt. The base of population movement in Nubia has shifted somewhat from the traditional patterns of labor migration to one of permanent migration, as exemplified by certain changes in the institutional structure of Nubian urban society. A significant proportion of the urban Nubian migrant population is composed of the spouses and their young children living as nuclear households in the cities. The children today are born and educated in the cities. The character of occupations has shifted somewhat from those secured on a particularistic basis of membership in clan and family to those dependent on the acquisition of skills having universalistic prescriptions.

The new Aswan Dam has resulted in the relocation of those persons who made their immediate homes in the villages of Nubia. Hopefully, because of the availability of arable land, New Nubia located at Kom Ombo will become indigenously viable. Even so, it seems almost certain that the

cityward trend of the present Nubian population movement will continue and will be further consolidated within the urban centers of Egypt.

## Notes

- 1 Of the adult males (fifteen years and over), approximately 24 percent are single, 70 percent are married, 2 percent are divorced, 3 percent are widowed, and the marital status of 1 percent is unknown. Of the adult females (fifteen years and over), 9 percent are single, 49 percent are married, 5 percent divorced, and 37 percent widowed.
- 2 A crude ratio was computed by the formula "all children under the age of five/all females between the ages of fifteen and forty-four x 100."
- 3 The sample for the Cairo survey was developed from a systematic enumeration of approximately seven percent of Nubian village households [in sixty-six villages in thirteen *nabias*]. From the village household heads, information was received concerning the names and whereabouts of all family members within certain degrees of relationship not resident at the time in the villages. Subsequently, 747 persons so identified as heads of Cairo households were interviewed with the use of a schedule covering a variety of social and economic factors.
- 4 More than 95 percent of the Cairo respondent group were born in Nubia. This percentage is probably not representative of the birthplaces of the total non-village Nubian population since it reflects the fact that the Cairo respondents were adults and were closely identified with an existing or recently existing household in Nubia.
- 5 Sixty-one percent of the male Cairo respondents were married and accompanied by their wives; 21 percent were married with their wives in Nubia; 14 percent were single; and 4 percent were previously married but currently widowed or divorced.
- 6 The average number of persons per Nubian household was 4.6; for the general population of Cairo, 4.7 persons constitute the average household.
- 7 In less than three out of a hundred households a grandparent is present; in less than five out of a hundred households a sibling to the respondent is present; and in only about four out of a hundred households an in-law or other person is present.
- 8 J. L. Burckhardt, *Travels in Nubia* (London: John Murray, 1822), and Edward William Lane, *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (London: Dent, 1908).
- 9 Burckhardt, *Travels in Nubia*, 136–37. This estimate approximates the contemporary figures for the Nubian population in Egypt and the Sudan. The

population has no doubt seen sharp fluctuations even during recent history as a result of warfare, famine, and epidemics.

- 10 Rolf Herzog, "Valuable 19th century Nubian itineraries by German-speaking travelers," unpublished paper given at the Symposium on Contemporary Nubia, Aswan, January 1964.
- 11 The census figures, particularly the earlier ones, should be considered only a fair approximation since Egyptian census reports in general have not been noted for accuracy. *Report of the Egyptian Association for Population Studies*, United Arab Republic, Cairo, 1960, p.102. The 1960 sex ratio may have been raised by reason of the fact that many males returned to the villages temporarily during the census-taking period for the purpose of establishing a right to compensation.
- 12 Herzog, for example, reports that in the seventeenth century Nubians voluntarily went to urban centers of Egypt, worked for small wages and after about two years, when they had accumulated some savings, returned to Nubia. They were said to have been employed in the urban communities as servants and were faithful in the discharge of their duties. Rolf Herzog, unpublished paper, Cairo, 1960.
- 13 Charles Callender, "Social organization in a Kenuzi Nubian community," unpublished paper, given at the Symposium on Contemporary Nubia, Aswan, January 1964. Callender believes that the dam gave further impetus to an existing migration pattern.
- 14 In the four northernmost *nabias*, flooded in 1903, the sex ratio average for the years 1882 and 1897 was 0.67; for the years 1907, 1917, 1927, 1937, 1947, and 1960, it was 0.52. In the two *nabias* immediately to the south, flooded in 1913, the average sex ratio for the years 1882, 1897, 1907 was 0.65; for the years 1917, 1927, 1937, 1947, and 1960 it was 0.48. In the seven *nabias* in the south, flooded in 1938, the average sex ratio for the years 1882, 1897, 1907, 1917, 1927, and 1937 was 0.55; for the years 1947 and 1960 it was 0.52.
- 15 A number of studies of labor migration have shown that aside from the chronic lack of economic opportunity in rural areas, migration may be a basis for acquiring needed skills, a manner of escaping the village way life, a method of enjoying the glamour of the city, and a means of obtaining a type of sophistication often admired in the village. (G. Balandier, *Sociologie des Brazzavilles Noires*, 40–53 [Paris: Librairie Armand Colin, 1955]).
- 16 Our analysis shows data somewhat at variance with the general impression that when a wife accompanies her husband to the urban centers, she returns to Nubia to have her children. Today, most children of Cairo Nubian families are born in Cairo.

17 For a clear and concise summary of a number of migration hypotheses and their evaluation, see Egon Ernest Bergel, *Urban Sociology*, 211–239 (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1955).

18 The hypothesis was tested that volume of migration to Cairo varies inversely with distance between Cairo and the *nabia* of origin:

$$r = .18; p > .05$$

Volume of migration was computed by the formula:

$$V_d = \frac{M_d P_t}{100 P_n}$$

where:  $V_d$  = Volume of migrants to a particular destination,

$M_d$  = Number of migrants from a particular *nabia* to a particular place of destination,

$P_t$  = Total population of *nabias*, and

$P_n$  = Population of a particular *nabia*.

19 Samuel Stouffer, "Intervening Opportunities: A Theory Relating Mobility to Distance" in *American Sociological Review* 5 (December 1950): 6.

20  $V_t = M_t P_t / 100 P_a$ , where  $V_t$  = volume of migration,  $M_t$  = number of migrants from a particular *nabia* to all places of destination,  $P_t$  = total population of *nabias*, and  $P_a$  = population of a particular *nabia*.

21 Thayer Scudder, "The Economic Basis and Effect of Nubian Labor Migration," unpublished paper, Symposium on Contemporary Nubia, Aswan, January 1964 [in this volume]. Scudder, in his carefully documented study, shows a close relation between migration and the availability of arable land.

22 The migration of Nubian males at about the age of fifteen years, for example, was an expected behavior and might be considered as institutionalized.

23 It has been noted by a number of observers that in some *nabias* arable land was uncultivated, presumably by reason of the absence of males who were working in the cities. Otherwise the land could have been made productive.

24 The word *bab* in Arabic means gate.



## Gender Relations in Kenuz Public Domains

Charles Callender\*

**T**he Kenuz homeland was northern Egyptian Nubia until the 1960s, when they were moved to Kom Ombo. Before their relocation a long process of labor migration had brought most Kenuz to Egyptian cities. The segment remaining in Nubia was mostly female, by a ratio of 3 to 1. Most of its adult women were widowed, divorced, or married to migrants. This resident population, depending heavily on migrants for support of its social and cultural institutions as well as for its livelihood, consisted of many small tribes, each a segmentary lineage system and autonomous as far as the provincial administration permitted. The political and jural system was based on the segmentary structure, and Muslim religious institutions were tribally owned and organized.

An analysis of Kenuz society in terms of mode of production is impossible, given the shattered nature of their traditional economy and the central importance cash remittances had assumed as the subsistence base. Women did most of the agriculture, growing food for household consumption. A woman without husbands or sons, defined as poor, could expand her economic activities by selling agricultural produce, peddling, or offering services to supplement the income she received from migrants. A few women

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\*An earlier version of this article appeared in *MERA Forum* 7, no. 1 (spring 1983): 7–9. Reproduced by permission.

were entirely self-supporting, keeping shops or acting as mediums in the *zar* cult. While their economic transactions were not supposed to involve males, one widespread and important exception existed. Most women raised sheep and goats and sold the young animals to men, either local residents or outsiders who came through Nubia for this purpose. Even a woman living with her husband sold her animals herself.

Within traditional Kenuz culture certain domains were defined as male, others as female, and some combined both genders. Most male domains were those usually classed as public. Most female domains fell into the category often called domestic. But a dichotomy of two sharply defined binary oppositions is very misleading. Three public domains were recognized in behavior, if not in formal descriptions.

One public domain consisted of relations with the outside world, beyond each cluster of regularly interacting tribes in the homeland. Kenuz ideology defined this domain as male. Most migrant men worked. Women were not allowed to earn wages or supplement household income in any way. We discovered two migrant women who were employed, one of whom in the standard male pattern supported her parents in Nubia. Being poor and without real economic support, they could break the rules; but such violations, unlike practice in the homeland, were consciously concealed and not admitted. Women who had to enter the outside world, traveling between Nubia and the urban centers, were escorted and protected by men who served as buffers. When the outside world impinged upon Nubia in the form of government officials or other visitors, men dealt with it, shielding women from contact. Here, too, exceptions existed. If the outsiders were merchants or peddlers, women acted on their own. In villages lacking resident men or whose men happened to be away, women received outside visitors and used the formal behavior employed by men in these circumstances.

The second public domain consisted of the formal political and jural system. This domain was also male. Each tribe was politically organized as a system of lineage heads, one of whom headed the tribe. These men, who made any political decisions, also judged legal cases. Although women could initiate legal action against each other and against men, they acted through their lineage heads and were forbidden to attend hearings. The freedom of male plaintiffs and defendants was also abridged, but less drastically. In this public domain, women were subject to the legal and political authority of men, but only when men acted as agents of the tribal system. Outside this context a male attempt to exert authority could be ignored, and if carried beyond exhortation might precipitate a lawsuit against him. Male authority

also entailed obligations to protect women and to provide economic support. If a woman lacked close male relatives, men of her lineage segment assumed this duty.

Female participation in the political and jural domain, if greater than Kenuz men admitted, was not really public. The position a lineage or tribal head took on an issue might be guided by his wife. He would not admit this, although other men might draw attention to the fact, expressing disapproval. Marriages crossing tribal boundaries had recognized political significance. While women obviously directed the process of spouse selection, men conducted formal marriage negotiations. The male sphere of action was defined primarily by the lineage-tribal system. Women organized themselves into small groups based on residence rather than descent, centering on a neighborhood. Each neighborhood had a leader: a woman of strong personality, relatively well-to-do, and usually the wife or sister of a lineage head. These leaders constituted the main linking points between the formal political system, based on descent and composed of men, and the informal residential system composed of women.

One significant incident illustrating male-female political interaction occurred in 1962, after several hundred migrant women returned to our district to establish eligibility for resettlement. Each week a large crowd of women gathered to meet the postboat, filling the landing, noisily greeting new arrivals from the cities, joining them in loud mourning for any deaths, and calling out questions to passengers. Their behavior outraged the men of the local tribe. It occurred within the domain of external relations, violating all its rules; it was also a very public indication that male authority and control had become tenuous. The men instituted a new rule forbidding women's presence at the landing, specifying that offenders would be fined and, if necessary, beaten. The day it went into effect most of the men found reasons to stay away, leaving its enforcement to one man. He was ignored at first and obtained compliance only by giving the customary Kenuz signals that he was about to go into uncontrollable rage. The women gave the standard response to such signals, leaving him alone—that is, going away. During the following weeks they gradually began returning in growing numbers but were careful to behave quietly. The effective rule thus became one requiring 'proper' behavior by women at the landing, rather than a ban on their presence. Tribal regulations restricting women, which seemed nicely calculated not to exceed the point where compliance would have been refused, were probably compromises between their original forms and what women accepted.

The third public domain, celebration, involved very different rules of behavior. Women acted as organized, highly visible groups. Although their conventional spatial separation from men persisted, even if minimally, both sexes acted jointly and their interaction was regarded as essential. A woman traveling by sailboat was usually defined as entering the external domain, wore unobtrusive dress, and avoided notice by staying below deck in the hold. If a boat trip was part of a celebration, women wore bright clothing and gold jewelry and sat on the deck, with men clustering at the other end. During the trip both groups alternated in singing. Men periodically fired rifles and women responded with *zagharid*, or joy cries. This alternation of male and female sounds characterized the celebration domain. Similarly, for a celebration in a village *khema*, a building normally forbidden to them, women congregated with men, occupying opposite ends of its courtyard and alternating in songs.

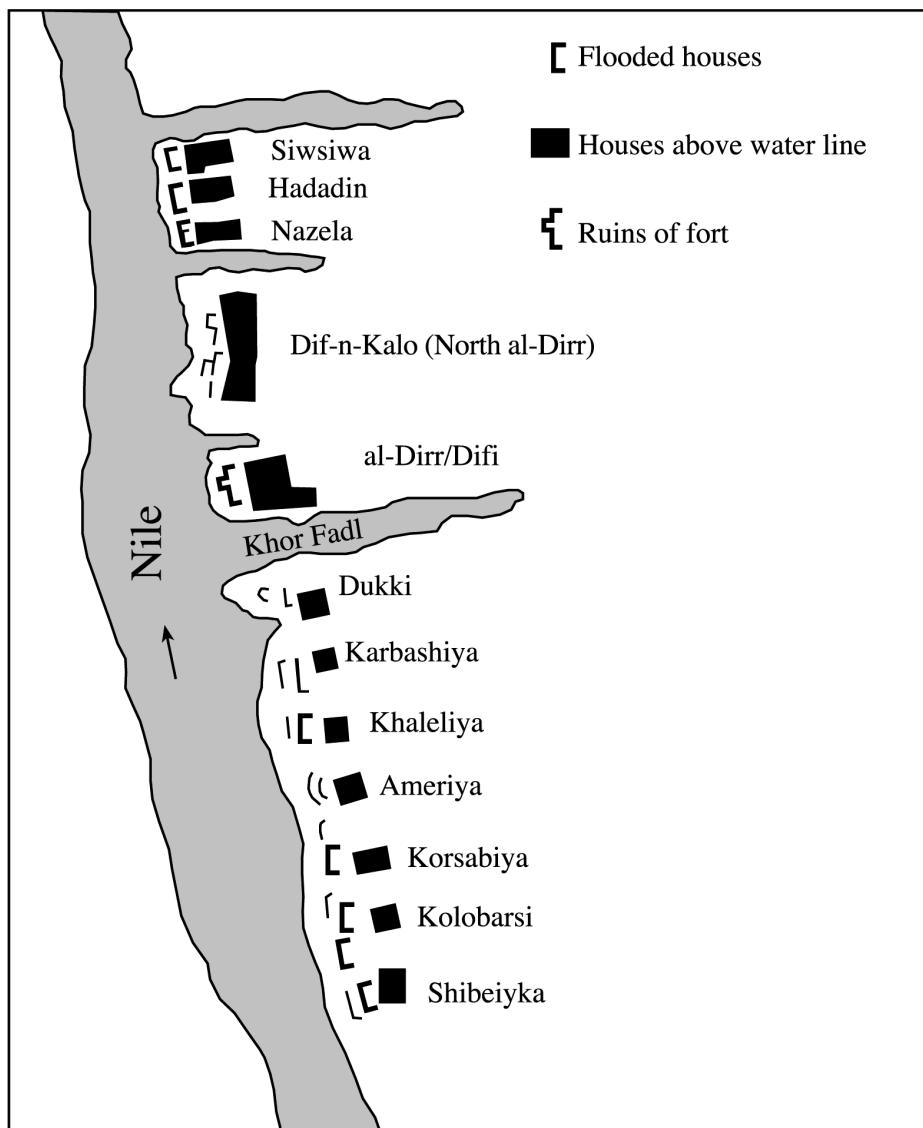
Celebration was part of the ritual system, limited to certain sectors. Formal Islam, tied to the tribal organization, was an explicitly male activity. Ritual centering on spirits living in the Nile, while very important, had no direct links to tribal organization and was limited to women. Men had formerly participated before drastic religious reforms in the early 1900s purged anything regarded as contrary to Islam. Some reforms, especially in death ritual, abridged the activities of women but most of the new rules restricted men. River-spirit rituals were redefined as not religion, and consequently as harmless unless men took part. Celebration did not characterize ritual areas limited to one gender. As a domain, it particularly marked saint cults.

Saint cults provided the main occasions when the diverse strands of Kenuz religion came together. Saints had been particularly devout Muslims, whose commemoration was consonant with traditional Kenuz piety. Every cult simultaneously had some very close association with river spirits. For women especially—but not exclusively—they provided the most immediate opportunities for interacting with the divine, and the most available medium through which to ask its aid—often for the benefit of men. Each tribe had a cult, centering on the shrine of a holy person who was also an ancestor. The cult was thus another aspect of tribal organization. Yet here women held formal public office. A cult had two officials, a male who organized its annual celebration and a female who was custodian of the shrine, with important celebration duties. Men usually described custodians as elderly widows of limited means, given this post to ensure them a small income from donations to the shrines. The men's secularizing of this role, while ideologically necessary, was a fiction that did not accord with the observable

facts. Shrine custodians inherited their offices. The one exception, actually appointed to her position, was already a ritual leader in the river-spirit cult.

Besides the public role of women and their joint action with men, celebration included one activity that erased spatial segregation. Women and men danced together, although women covered their faces with head scarves for the occasion. Women purchased their right to dance by donations to the cult. These dances, identical for cult and wedding celebrations, involving women, and with movements somewhat reminiscent of the sexual act, disturbed male reformers, who tried to curb them. Significantly, they had survived the period of major reforms. A compromise acceptable to women was restricting this activity to unmarried females. Although reformers described them as 'little girls,' most dancers in these circumstances were adolescents, and marriageable, given prominence and displayed to advantage. A more drastic restriction prohibited any dancing by females. Here, women fought back by cutting off donations to the cult. If this did not bring a compromise, the celebration itself soon died out.

The Kenuz were a society that, as described by its men, emphasized male hegemony with women subordinate and limited to domestic concerns. Yet in one important public domain, that of celebration, the public participation of women was essential. In others, women were by no means passive counters. They could force compromises between their desires and the wishes of men. Kenuz ideology, primarily a male artifact, did not acknowledge these roles and was thus a very misleading representation of actual behavior.



Map 7: al-Dirr District, 1963. From Anna Hohenwart-Gerlachstein, “Die Dorfgemeinschaft von El Derr, Nubien” in *Wiener Völkerkundliche Mitteilungen* 12(7)[n.s.]: 39–49, 1965, here p.40.

# The Village Community of al-Dirr, Nubia

Anna Hohenwart-Gerlachstein\*

In the years 1962 and 1963 I carried out urgent anthropological research in Nubia, under the auspices of the International Committee on Urgent Anthropological and Ethnological Research and with the support of the Federal Education Ministry, the Austrian Academy of Sciences, the Austrian Research Council, the Wenner-Gren Fund for Anthropological Research of New York, and the Cultural Office of the City of Vienna.<sup>1</sup> My main interest was the study of those villages which would inevitably be doomed to destruction as a consequence of resettlement. The native population had to come to terms with the idea that they would have to sacrifice their homes and living space to the technical and economic requirements of the state, and to seek a new home in foreign parts.

To carry out such detailed investigations I chose the Lower Nubian village of al-Dirr as my headquarters. There I strove to document the Nubian village in its final stage. I am grateful to the collaborative work with indigenous families and exceptional interpreters—above all the two schoolteachers Hussein Abdel Galil and Aziz Abdel Wahab—which enabled me to collect such good documentation in the short time available to me.

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\*An earlier version of this article appeared as “Die Dorfgemeinschaft von El Derr, Nubien,” in *Wiener Völkerkundliche Mitteilungen* 12, no. 7 (n.s., 1965): 39–49. Translated into English by Nicholas Hopkins, 2009. Reproduced by permission.

The village territory of al-Dirr stretches along the east bank of the Nile about 200 kilometers south of Aswan. It includes twelve hamlets of various sizes and dissimilar population densities (see the orientation sketch and annex). The landscape along the banks does not seem to have changed much in the entire Nubian area since the oldest settlement period, as is attested by numerous excavations. But the intrusion of humans with their technology caused decisive changes. The flooding of al-Dirr occurred after the second raising of the Aswan dam about thirty years ago. The houses, which had been preserved by the sand for endless periods, could not withstand the rising waters of the dam lake more than a short while, and then collapsed into the flood. The ruins appeared only during the low water period on the Nile in the summer months. When this happened I was able to map out the old village territory.

The banks of the river were lined with extensive fields and pastures. Directly on the cultivated area was a line of inundated ruins of farmsteads. The raisings of the dam had spelled the end of the extensive palm groves. A couple of palms remained standing and a few broad-branched sycamores enlivened the landscape. Four hundred years ago the residence of the governors of Lower Nubia stood in the former nucleus of al-Dirr, which in Nubian is called *difi*, or castle. In the Ottoman period, in the sixteenth century, military leaders had taken over the ownership of the land, ruled it independently, and acquired a high reputation. Their title was *kashef*, equivalent to 'prince.' In the southern part of Egyptian Nubia there were until the evacuation numerous families that derived their ancestry from these *kushaf* (plural of *kashef*), foreign leaders of bands of troops from Eastern Europe or from Asia Minor.<sup>2</sup> Many tribal names in this area testify to this origin: one can meet, for instance, Anadol from Anatolia, Magyarab from Hungary, Moradab and Abrasab from Turkey.

In addition to the ruins of the castle, I studied the foundations of the collapsed dwellings, destroyed by the flood, but standing as silent witnesses to the now-flooded splendor. From every structure there spoke a piece of local history, and this was narrated to me by the natives. Abu Hifni, an honest peasant about seventy years of age from Difi-n-kalo, that is, North al-Dirr, spoke frankly: "Soon after the turn of the last century, the difficulties grew from decade to decade. The cultivated land was lost bit by bit. The land of al-Dirr was until then considered one of the richest zones in Nubia. The beauty and luxury of this area were known all over the world." I would like to hark back here to the classic travel accounts, above all one by the famous shaykh Ibrahim (the Swiss Johann Ludwig Burckhardt), who

lauded the extensive high-yielding fields and the dense palm groves, and praised the rich pastures which allowed Nubians to raise impressive herds and keep a stock of goods for the winter months.<sup>3</sup> The decline of the agricultural economy of al-Dirr was caused by the flooding of the land for eight or nine months. Of the cultivable fields only narrow strips of land remained along the river, and their annual yield was progressively smaller.<sup>4</sup> The change in the foundations of the economy brought about decisive social change in the population. The self-contained village communities could not survive.

From this point of view, the government felt obliged to make available other lands elsewhere as compensation for the heavily affected areas. There were a few areas in Nubia where the desert was farther from the river, and which seemed suitable for the establishment of pumping stations and canals to extend the cultivable zones. Land in the area of Ballana was made available for the people of al-Dirr. But in order to make use of these lands at some distance from the home villages, some families of the settled clans had to move there to oversee the cultivation of the fields and to share on an annual basis the harvests with their fellow clansmen who had remained at home. This land could be inherited as family property. The yield was divided into three parts, one for the owner, one for the tiller, and the third for the transporter. This rule held, as Aziz Abdel Wahab told me in the last year, until the evacuation.

I also heard first-hand from the mouth of the village elder Abu Hifni how the changes in the economy worked themselves out in new social forms in Nubia: "In old times the village and clan organization of the Nubians was almost identical. After the construction of the first Aswan Dam, the Kenuz Nubians, who were the northernmost inhabitants, were the first to be threatened by the rising waters. Many felt obliged to emigrate, and settled in other Nubian communities. A few found a place to settle among the Arab villages in the area of Korosko, and another part among the Fadija Nubians in the south, in al-Dirr, Tushka, and Ballana. When the dam was raised again, emigration began from the central and southern zones. And thus came the movement of the Fadija Nubians. In spite of the reception of people by the families that had moved to Ballana, the rest of the population was still too numerous for the subsistence means that had shrunk to a third. So it happened that in al-Dirr during the flood period most people could no longer use its settlements, had to give up the old places and build anew." The Nubians had been able, until then, to cope with the new situation and to adapt. They built new dwellings with skill

and taste, which in their fastidious appearance did not appear to be inferior to the ones they had had before.

The Nubian villages shared a similar situation. The expansion of the settlements followed the geographical lay of the land between the water and the desert. In most cases the villages rose by terraces or steps and the houses were ordered in rows, with the house front always facing the river. In many cases, the hilltops were crowned with picturesque buildings. Their spacious construction and gracious lines were reminders of the great past of this country.

If one wandered through the villages in their final state, one would see mirrored the country's tragedy: the half of the village that lay in the flood zone was submerged, while the other half consisted in part of abandoned houses. Because of a shortage of building sites, pastureland, and raw material, and the ensuing unemployment, migration has increased over the years. First the men went alone to seek means to support their households in the cities of Egypt and the Sudan, in order to be able to send their families much-needed sums of money. When they found a good position, many brought their families to live with them, and closed up their Nubian houses. So it came to be that about 50 percent of the Nubian population left the progressively poorer country (See Table 1). The houses remained. In his heart, no Nubian ever gave up his homeland, but rather always thought of returning. During my stays in Nubia I often met old people in different places who had worked for years abroad and had earned their living, but then with advancing years had joyfully returned to their beautiful home and their peaceful country.

The Nubian clan organization, to which people still hold today, contributed a great deal to the retention of close ties to the homeland despite temporary absence. I observed that a Nubian used every opportunity to maintain personal contact with relatives near and distant, and also to reestablish contacts after a long separation. One could almost feel that the long separation actually contributed to increasing the feeling of solidarity and community. It was not easy for the Nubians to visit remote villages or to send messages from one place to another. The principal means of transport was sailboat or donkey, apart from the postboat that went up and downstream once a week. The post boat was the only large means of transport for people, animals, and goods. Although it stopped in the main villages, the inhabitants of distant hamlets still had to walk to the landing point.

The days the postboat was due—whether coming from Egypt or from the Sudan—were great events for each village community. Given the

changing levels of water in the Nile, the schedule of the post boat was highly variable. In general the arrival times could only be given with approximation, and one had to be ready to wait for three or four hours. So the landing day turned into an occasion for the village to meet. From early dawn people began to move toward the river port, and the procession continued until the eagerly awaited boat arrived, everyone disembarked, the goods were unloaded, and then finally everyone went their way again and disappeared into the houses, while the post boat slowly made its way through the current. The day of a boat landing had the same meaning for a Nubian village as the market day for another village.

Despite their difficulties each village acquired a certain pace of life which helped it to overcome the daily troubles. I got very used to the rhythm of al-Dirr, and learned how to share in it. Simplicity on the one hand, self-composure on the other, were noteworthy phenomena that were

**Table 1: The Police District [*‘umudiya*] of al-Dirr**

Hamlets	Number of houses	Number of inhabited houses	Number of abandoned houses	Number of residents in 1962–63
Siwsíwa	170	70	100	210
Hadadin	150	70	80	120
Názela	50	9	41	27
Difi-n-kálo	200	120	80	360
al-Dirr = Difi	50	48	2	240
Dúkki	10	5	5	15
Karbashíya	15	7	8	21
Khalelíya	10	6	4	30
Ameríya	10	5	5	20
Korsabíya	20	10	10	30
Kolobársi	13	0	13	0
Shibéiyka	15	1	14	2
Tótal al-Dirr	713	351	362	1075

expressed in the collective spirit of the village. The fate of each individual village inhabitant touched and interested the others. They felt obligated to each other, were responsible for each other, and demonstrated their readiness to lend a hand at all times. The community spirit was translated into collective action, for example in agriculture or the harvest: parts of a family might be temporarily absent and have emigrated; one or another might be sick; the river currents threatened to reach the agricultural land and flood it before the sparse harvest could be brought in; a particular household might not have an available male. But the neighbors were always ready and worked with the same enthusiasm as if it were their own gain at stake—and the crop would be saved. There were many examples where the community intervened to ensure the well-being of a comrade. Love of the neighbor, as was shown in cases of illness or death, enthusiastic participation and readiness to sacrifice, as could be seen in the impressive wedding celebrations, all of this was singular proof for this pure, inner feeling of belonging.

It is hard to give an overview of the extensive village complex of al-Dirr. My presentation of the village sections is based on the official information of the police station in al-Dirr. The twelve hamlets of the police district [*‘umudiya*] of al-Dirr stretched along the sloping banks of the river for about fifteen kilometers. The hamlets were separated from one another through breaks in the valley, called *kbors* or dry valleys, which reached from the riverbed to the edge of the stony desert. The main village of al-Dirr was recognizable in its outer appearance as the old Nubian capital. Here stood the lower area with the ruins of the former castle, here on the plateau was found the brilliant white mosque, here was the house of the mayor with its *madyafa*, the reception porch for men’s gatherings. Right nearby were the police station and the school.

Because al-Dirr was very spread out, the mayor could not administer it alone. He had two assistant mayors. All three men enjoyed the full confidence of the villagers. People referred to them as shaykhs, and gave them great respect. The mayor was elected by the people, and he named the assistant mayors himself. From the ranks of the elders he established a village council, which assembled in certain circumstances. The three mayors endeavored to discuss and settle all village matters among themselves insofar as possible, so that it was rare that in a case of law or dispute a higher authority would have to be involved. The mayor also had to oversee the registration of births and deaths and to make sure that the children of the village attended school regularly.

One should also mention that the school in al-Dirr was founded before school attendance was generally required in Nubia. More than twenty years ago, the merchants in al-Dirr had made land available and transformed their houses into proper school buildings. Al-Dirr's significance as the former capital of Nubia was behind this. Thanks to the schools, al-Dirr became one of the few educational centers. There was an elementary school for boys and girls aged six to twelve years (the required period for school attendance), a lower middle school, which boys and girls could voluntarily attend and which covered four more years, and a boarding section which could house two hundred and fifty pupils of both sexes.

The early introduction of schools in al-Dirr is proof of the progressiveness and receptiveness of the Nubians to the notions of a higher living standard. Wisely, over the last two generations, they gave their youth a good basic education in their home villages. Since school attendance was previously not required, we should not be surprised that in the older generation the majority of the women were still illiterate. Furthermore Nubian is an unwritten language and most of the women only knew Nubian.

Since the introduction of required schooling, Arabic has become the language of instruction. Reading and writing were learned together with the foreign language. Nubian children today all speak Arabic.

I had a favorable impression of teaching and instruction. It was significant that al-Dirr had supported a large number of its young people to graduate with teacher training degrees and then be assigned to their home village. Between teachers and pupils there was close understanding. One could sense that the family atmosphere, in the shape of a father-son or father-daughter relationship, was as strong as could be found anywhere else in the world. The spirit of cooperation that characterized the village community was also evident in the whole school.

If I were to make a cross-section of the village population, it would seem right to characterize their attitude as democratic. Nubians denied that there were any class differences among them. The Fadija often stressed to me that social rank and financial level meant nothing to them. In reality, there were layers, which were hard for outsiders to recognize. The sensitivity of the Nubians was such that even an expression of pity or a sympathetic look could wound. For this reason, one cannot directly give alms to a poor person, but should do it through an intermediary. I often noticed a nobleman inviting a person of lower class to a meal. The higher placed person never called attention to his superiority, helping the other unaffectedly and without speaking of it.

One day I was asking about welfare efforts in Nubia, and people were surprised at my question. "We are all for one and one for all. Why do we need an official structure for that? Here no one is in need or oppressed, neglected by others." These were not empty words. People showed the truth of this statement every day in their deeds. Thus it was often maintained that the Nubians were a single great family, with strong relations among its members. Of course Nubia represents a linguistic and ethnic enclave within the broader realm of Arab-Islamic culture. But if you inspect this closely, the different assumptions in the Nubian zone are considerable. The principle that the strongest bond that links people is the blood relationship is valid for the Nubian endogamous clans as much as in the rest of the Islamic world. Marriage among cousins is the preferred union. The following sequence was prescribed: the first choice for a bride would be the father's brother's daughter, second the mother's brother's daughter, third the father's sister's daughter, and fourth the mother's sister's daughter. If no marriage partner could be found in these categories, a man could look among more distant relatives. On the one hand, the relatives of the groom had a right to approve, on the other hand the groom had the duty to inform family members of his choice. Only after the groom had the oral or written approval of the relatives, could he make his actual proposal of marriage to the girl he had selected. It was rare for a girl to turn down a proposal. If a man tried to disregard the traditional rules, he would lose his status in the clan and thus also the support expected from the community.

In their final days at home the clans in Nubia displayed great differences. There were clan groups which remained in their discrete settlement area until the evacuation. I recall the Tenoki or the Gharbiab in Tumas wa Afia village, where a widely spread village complex was comprised of many hamlets. Each of these hamlets was inhabited by a group of the same clan. Hamlet and clan community were identical. Several of these clan communities formed a subtribe. These historical complexes of clans continued to live following this pattern despite all external pressures. Other villages were quite mixed in their hamlet communities. Thus, although many people had migrated to al-Dirr over the course of history, the resident families held onto their old marriage prescriptions. The richness of the kinship terminology was the proof of this.

Old Nubia no longer exists. The village complex of al-Dirr is now given over to the waters. The evacuation of the population was completed in April 1964, and their new installation in the settlement area near Kom Ombo followed immediately. Al-Dirr is now one of the thirty-three new

villages which have been located in the great Nile bend on the eastern bank. The new constructions have small dimensions, one house is lined up next to another. Today's villages differ in essence from the old ones. While in Old Nubia homes were spread over an area of three hundred kilometers on both banks of the Nile, the new ones are squeezed into sixty kilometers along the east bank. Future studies will show whether the Nubians will lose their equilibrium because of changes in their environment and dwelling patterns or whether their strong consciousness of self and their sturdy social system will once again prove equal to the test. As in earlier times, the Nubians have shown themselves open to new ways, to taking up new ideas, and to incorporating unknown elements in their lives. At the same time, this coexists with the desire to continue the spirit of their people, their traditional customs and usages, and also not to abandon their customary laws in the future. As they told me, they were firmly determined to maintain their "Nubianness" in its noble form and to manage the worthy heritage of a magnificent past.

## Notes

- 1 See also Anna Hohenwart-Gerlachstein, "Dringende ethnologische Forschungen in Aegyptisch-Nubien", *Wiener Völkerkundliche Mitteilungen* 10 (1962): 53–60.
- 2 Herzog, Rolf. *Die Nubier* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1957), pp. 61, 82.
- 3 Burckhardt, J. L. *Travels in Nubia* (London: J. Murray, 1819), pp. 18, 19, 29–31.
- 4 As soon as the lake began to flood the sorghum fields after the 1933/34 elevation, the harvest had to be brought home in sail boats, as an emergency measure. This was the last harvest; the millennial farmland is now forever submerged by Nile water.



# Change in Religion in a Resettled Nubian Community, Upper Egypt

Hussein M. Fahim\*

## The Problem

The question of change in religion in Middle Eastern communities has been recently studied by several researchers. A review of these studies reveals three main approaches to the problem. The first approach, used principally by orientalists, treats the problem in terms of either history or theology. Among the most significant of these studies are those of H.A.R. Gibb (1938) and Bernard Lewis (1964), who hold that contact between the secular world of the west and the Muslim sacred way of life has brought elements of secularism into the Islamic religion.

In contrast to the historical-theological approach is that of sociological analysis and interpretation; yet it arrives at a similar conclusion. Daniel Lerner (1958), Raphael Patai (1962), and Morroe Berger (1964) are the most well-known social scientists adopting this approach. Only Lerner's study was based primarily on interviews in the Middle East; the studies of both Berger and Patai present generalizations based mainly on secondary sources and thus lack the conviction and concreteness provided by first-hand observation.

The third approach may be termed ethnological. Carried out by anthropologists, it depends on first-hand information from specific settings collected

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during resident fieldwork. The most recently published of such studies dealing with change in Middle Eastern communities are those of Barclay (1964) in Sudan and of Lutfiyya (1966) in Jordan. However, their accounts, which include comprehensive descriptions of village life, lack profound theoretical analysis and comparison.

The need for more detailed data on single cultural elements or social institutions, in addition to the collection of information on a composite of elements, is vital. An approach which directs its interest to a specific problem is useful in two respects. First, it makes a detailed contribution to the wider problem; and second, it allows for comparison and for the verification of generalizations with reference to specific facts. In dealing with the problem of religion in Middle Eastern communities, actual practices should be presented, described, and analyzed. There is need for data that reflects observed behavior. It is from this anthropological point of view that the present study will deal with change in religion in the Muslim Nubian community of Kanuba (pseudonym).

Kanuba, one of the Nubian settlements of 1934 in Daraw, some thirty miles north of Aswan, was chosen in 1963 by the Social Research Center (SRC) of the American University in Cairo (AUC) for a community study aimed at investigating the effects of resettlement on traditional patterns of Nubian culture and society.<sup>1</sup> Limited resettlement of Nubians had occurred voluntarily as one solution to economic hardships resulting from gradual inundation of many parts of Nubia following the construction in 1902 and subsequent heightenings (1912, 1933) of the Aswan Dam.

This paper represents part of an ongoing analysis of the Kanuba material collected during a two-year period of resident fieldwork (1963–64).<sup>2</sup> The main theoretical proposition of our study is that resettlement has resulted in more contact and communication of Nubians with non-Nubian communities, consequently modifying some aspects of the traditional Nubian way of life. Cultural changes do not occur in isolation; thus, the changing conditions of Kanuba have directly or indirectly affected the community's religious system. What happens to traditional religious beliefs and practices in a Muslim community undergoing change due to an accelerated trend of modernization brought about by resettlement is the major issue to be considered.

### **The Setting**

Kanuba was established in 1934 on a flat piece of land of about five hundred feddans.<sup>3</sup> The founders of the community migrated from Nubia when their

land property was inundated as a result of the second raising of the Aswan Dam in 1933. The village is situated about three kilometers from Daraw, a town with a central market. Daraw's population (14,000) is composed of several ethnic groups, each with its own residential section and subculture. Kanuba, too, is divided into ethnic sections. A Mahasi-speaking group occupies the center of the village, while a Kenuz-speaking group is spread on the northern and southern margins. The Mahasi group, who call themselves al-Nubiyyin, constitute the majority of the Kanuba population and come from the southern part of Nubia. The second group, known as al-Kenuz, came from northern Nubia a few years later and settled on the peripheries of the Mahasi-speaking group.<sup>4</sup>

When Nubians began to settle in Kanuba in 1934, they planned to preserve their traditional economic and social patterns. Their initial efforts to farm the new land, however, met with failure due to scarcity of water for irrigation. They then abandoned agriculture and sought work in cities. In the late 1930s the village became, like most of the Nubian villages along the Nile prior to resettlement, "a kind of refuge for both men and women who, in regard to city life, have become marginal in social and economic terms" (Geiser 1967).

This situation did not last long. During the 1940s individuals and families who had already left returned to the village to cultivate the land once more; some attempted to overcome the water problem by constructing elaborate mechanical means of irrigation. Though water proved again to be beyond reach of the pumps, these families decided to stay in the village and were able to make their living by wage labor at jobs which were available either in local development projects or in government departments in the surrounding towns. As Nubians began to succeed in filling many clerical jobs in the region, the number of returnees increased until, by 1964, the population of the village reached over four hundred individuals. However, the sex ratio has remained low. Although many men have returned, the population of Kanuba includes a relatively high proportion of working-age men who still live most of the week in the nearby towns where they are employed.

As a result of resettlement and change in the village economic structure, social organization is no longer based on lineage and tribal affinity. Nuclear families have become important. Leadership has shifted from the traditional headman and group of elders to the village association consisting of community representatives with a board of elected officers. Actual leadership is now in the hands of a group of educated young people striving to make

Kanuba a model village having high standards of education, health, and economic progress.

Education has been changed from the primarily religious education of the *kuttab* to government schools.<sup>5</sup> Kanubans show a remarkable interest in educating their children through secondary school and even through the university level. Education for women has become desirable, and women have recently begun to play a role in village political life (for example, by casting their votes in the election of local representatives for the National Assembly, a phenomenon unheard of in Old Nubia). Due to improvement of the means of transportation and communication, exposure to a more modern life has become more feasible and intensive, and its effects are clearly evident.

As with other village institutions, the traditional Nubian religious system has also undergone change in Kanuba. In the following section, basic elements of the religious system as it existed in Nubia from 1934 to 1964 will be described and analyzed. Then the religious system of Kanuba during the same period will be examined, especially with respect to changes that occurred.

### **Religion in Nubia (1934–64)**

Since the fourteenth century Nubians have been followers of the Maliki school of Sunni (or Orthodox) doctrinal interpretation.<sup>6</sup> To illustrate their steady adherence to Islam, Nubians often recount the story of a German Christian mission which came to Nubia late in the nineteenth century in an attempt to convert Muslims. According to our Nubian informants, the mission succeeded in converting only one Nubian after fifty years of tireless effort. Finding the religious conversion a hopeless endeavor, the mission shifted its purpose to medical care of Muslim Nubians, whom they had come to greatly love and respect.

Nubians have maintained a religious system consisting of a complex mixture of orthodox and popular Islamic beliefs and practices. The orthodox aspect of their religion essentially involves belief in the five pillars of Islam (the oneness of God, prayer, fasting, almsgiving, and pilgrimage to Mecca) and adherence to the precepts of the Qur'an and the Sunna, or words and deeds of the Prophet Muhammad.

Popular Islamic beliefs and practices have traditionally been varied and complex among the Nubians. For example, shaykh (saint) cults associated with tomb shrines have been landmarks in most Nubian districts, particularly in the Kenuz and Arab areas. The number of shrines in a single district has sometimes reached as many as one hundred and fifty, as in the Dahmit district

of the Kenuz region (Nadim 1966). The *mulid* (an annual commemoration ceremony) at such shrines has been the most important ritual performed by the people of many villages. The occasion of the *mulid* served to gather Nubians not only from the same district, but also from outside Nubia; it gave various tribes the opportunity to demonstrate their generosity and thereby to gain prestige. Visiting the shrines and making vows was also a common practice. Ritualistic behavior connected with the shrines has been essential for Nubian ceremonial life.

Another important popular Islamic ritual is the practice of *zikr*, the principal act of worship for adherents of Sufism.<sup>7</sup> In Nubia, there have been several *turuq* (Sufi orders), but the majority of Nubians have followed that of ‘Othman Mirghani (AD 1793–1853). *Zikr* has been performed on various religious and secular occasions, as, for example, an integral part of the Friday congregational prayer and as a ritual associated with life-cycle ceremonies. The *zikr* ritual consists of long and complex procedures, including prayers, ecstatic chanting, drumming, body movements, Qur’anic recitals, incense burning, and the consumption of hot beverages.

In sharp contrast to the above are certain ‘pagan’ rituals and beliefs completely outside the realm of Islam, orthodox or popular (Kennedy 1966:787). Pagan practices have been a constant feature of numerous ceremonies, though they have tended to be submerged by and integrated with Islamic components and secular activities. The Nile, for example, has always been a focus of pagan Nubian beliefs and practices. As reported from a Kenuz village (el Guindi 1966), the people’s belief in the goodness of the river and of its spirits has given rise to a set of intricate practices for each *rite de passage*. Nile practices have provided the principal symbolism for life-cycle ceremonies.

Nubian ceremonial celebrations were traditionally community-wide events. For example, the ritual of giving condolences to relatives of the deceased lasted two weeks, during which guests had to be accommodated. Circumcision, especially of boys, involved a series of ceremonies that included visiting several shrines, sacrificing animals, performing *zikrs*, playing music, and chanting. Informants reported that traditional circumcision rituals often started long before the wedding day and continued for forty days afterward.<sup>8</sup> Birth also involved many such rituals and activities.

Due to the increasingly difficult economic situation, Nubian ceremonialism has been gradually modified. Since 1933, when the dam was raised and the economic situation became critical, most traditional ceremonies have tended to become relatively short and simple. Nevertheless, as always,

life in Nubia has continued to be oriented to a continual round of ceremonial activities (Kennedy 1967b).

An important feature of the Nubian religious system has been a conflict over which elements are truly Islamic. The basic issue is whether to include or exclude what we have termed here 'popular' Islamic features. (Both groups agree that the pagan elements should be eliminated from religious beliefs and practices.) This religious factionalism has not been a purely Nubian phenomenon, but is in fact an extension of a nationwide movement. Among Nubians, pressure to stamp out both popular and pagan practices has had considerable support among men who have had contacts with orthodox leaders and reformist sects during their urban work experiences (Kennedy 1967b).

However, attempts to eliminate popular Islamic practices have met with stiff resistance, for such practices have been an integral part of the traditional culture of the older generation. Women in particular have always tended to resist their reformist attempts. This could be attributed to sex differences in the urban experience. As a result of their broader urban experience, men usually have acquired more knowledge of orthodox Islam. Also, women have been left out of public Muslim rituals, whereas pagan ritual activities have been part of their everyday life.

Nubian religious beliefs and practices are articulated in several aspects of Nubian culture and society. An examination of Nubian folk medicine, for example, clearly shows how it has been a functional part of the people's religion. Supernatural causation has always been used to explain certain organic illnesses. Spirit possession, the evil eye, and fright are common causes attributed to several symptoms of both organic and non-organic illnesses. Treatment of such cases is frequently carried out by the use of supernatural measures and by local practitioners. The *zar* ceremony, for example, represents one traditional (and effective) means by which mental illnesses are treated through supposed contact with possessing spirit which are believed to cause such maladies (Kennedy, 1967a).<sup>9</sup>

Faith in God and shaykhs has also been closely related to Nubian medical practices. God can make people ill to punish them for bad deeds or sometimes to test their faith; and God is the only healer. Sick people have often visited the shrines of shaykhs to obtain help in getting well. When a sick person is cured, a *karama*, which involves a *zikr* performance and a meal service, is expected as a symbol of gratitude to God, who has healed.<sup>10</sup> Religious words and phrases quoted from the Qur'an are commonly used in *higabs* (charms) to counter the effects of the evil eye. Other examples abound.

### Religion in Kanuba (1934–64)

When Nubian migrants established their community in 1934 they maintained their traditional Nubian religious system as described above. During the late 1940s, however, the community witnessed a revitalization of popular Islamic features. This trend was fostered by a village religious leader who was an adherent of the Sufi order of Dayfiya. This leader held high status among the Nubians of Kanuba because of his Azhar education and his government position as the headmaster of the preparatory school in the nearby town of Daraw. He also had some charismatic qualities that made him a popular and dominant figure. During this period he acted as the informal imam (prayer leader) in the mosque services, despite the presence of a government-appointed imam. He was also the formal organizer and leader of popular Nubian Islamic activities.

During the same period, the village was also the scene of a movement which attempted to purify the Nubian religion of all beliefs or rituals not Islamic in character or origin. This reformative attempt, which was led by the formally appointed imam of the community, is still going on. It aims to promote the practices and ideas of the sect of *Ansar al-sunna al-mubammadiya* (advocates of the Prophet's traditions). During his long sojourn in Cairo for work in his early life, the formal imam had been a member of this group for several years. When he returned to the village in 1934 he advocated the sect's teaching. The movement of *Ansar al-sunna al-mubammadiya* has been strongly resisted by many Kanubans favoring the traditional popular practices. Although its goals have not yet been fully realized, the reformist group has created a religious split among the village people and has succeeded in bringing about considerable change in the performance of both orthodox rituals and Nubian ceremonies in the village.

Kanbua has thus been divided into two opposing religious groups. An orthodox group emphasizes the purification of the Nubian religion, while the popular group (once representing the majority and including the Kenuz enclave) favors the maintenance of customary Nubian religious beliefs and practices. Attempts aimed at settling the dispute between the two groups by means of local political traditions have failed.<sup>11</sup> The debate even attracted government attention, and a religion mediator was sent to settle the argument. This mediator ruled in favor of the popular group, but his ruling only served to increase the antagonism and conflict. As an informant described the situation at that time, "there were quarrels and disputes every day which were not only among men, but were also extended to women. It was about to lead the village to disorder and confusion."

When the informal popular religious leader (who had led the opposition to *Ansar al-sunna*) left the village in 1960, the official imam, with the help of an increasing number of supporters, was able to bring about significant reformative change in the religious practices of Kanuba. From that date to the time of the village study in 1964, a shift took place in favor of the conservative orthodox approach, though resistance to complete orthodoxy continues to exist and the two groups remain in conflict with each other.<sup>12</sup>

The orthodox trend is being strengthened for three main reasons. First the imam is officially responsible for the teaching of Islam and for leading the congregational rituals in the village. To Nubians, the imam is a man of high status, and respect for and obedience to the holder of this post have traditionally been emphasized. The second reason is that the departure of the leader of popular Islam and the death of his successor have left the popular group without a strong leader. Third, some of the teachings of orthodox Islam support and coincide with attempts of the young social reformers to modernize the village and to eliminate traditional customs that they view as insignificant or irrelevant to modern life. An example of this unity of aims is the attempt to encourage people to use the local medical clinic when they are ill instead of using charms or visiting shrines.

Our data indicates that all Kanuba villagers still maintain their adherence to Islam. Their conception of religion, however, has been modified by the controversy over what is true Islam and what is not. The people of Kanuba agree on the basic matter of belief, and no heretics or doubters exist in the village. As in Nubia, the Maliki order is still identified by the people as their doctrinal line of religious interpretation, though knowledge about it is commonly absent. Nevertheless, a continuing debate often takes place among the villagers with regard to the doctrinal legitimacy of popular religious beliefs and practices such as *zikrs* and shrine visits.

Orthodox practices have come to be the most essential part of religious beliefs and practices in the village. Prayers, fasting, almsgiving, and pilgrimage to Mecca are still valued by the people. The regular practice of these rituals or duties has been viewed as a sign of piety, a quality that is highly valued among Nubians. However, piety is losing its function as a primary determinant of status. Other criteria, such as possessing technical education and urban occupations, are becoming more important status determinants than religion.

The precise degree of performance of religious duties and rituals by Kanubans was difficult to determine through observation because some important rituals, such as daily prayers and fasting, are private and individual matters. Even questioning people on their observance of orthodox rituals was

found to yield invalid information, for people were reluctant to admit their neglect of essential religious observances such as fasting during the month of Ramadan or giving alms. However, questioning combined with observation showed that the common lack of knowledge of orthodox teachings is accompanied by a disinterest in the regular performance of certain rituals.

Our data indicate that knowledge of Islam is age-graded and sex-linked. About twenty of fifty informants interviewed had memorized three or four short *suras* (chapters) of the Qur'an. The rest also knew a few other *suras*; some Qur'anic stories, and some prophetic sayings, all of which they used to support their arguments concerning the 'proper' practice of Islam. The only *sura* memorized by all adults, including women, is *al-Fatiha* (the opening chapter of the Qur'an), because it is used in nearly all Kanuban ceremonies. According to our survey, women's knowledge of the Qur'an is minimal.<sup>13</sup> Some women may know the names of a few *suras* other than *al-Fatiha*, but they are only vaguely familiar with either the Qur'anic stories or the Prophet's sayings. They are also ignorant of the content of chants praising the Prophet that are uttered during the *zikrs*, ceremonies in which women do not participate. Old men are also more familiar with the chants for *zikrs* than are the young. Women show a lesser degree of knowledge of orthodox Islamic practices than do men, but on the other hand they tend to know more about traditional Nubian pagan folk beliefs and practices. Knowledge of non-Islamic religions such as Christianity is lacking among both men and women, young and old.

Lack of both knowledge and interest in several aspects of the religious system in Kanuba has been the concern of leaders of the village reformist groups. An attempt has been made to emphasize religious education among the people of Kanuba, including the women. Transmission of Islamic knowledge has currently been extended for the *kuttab* for children and the mosque for adult males to include new channels.<sup>14</sup> Nubian teachers in the village school are now responsible for further religious education beyond that assigned in the curriculum. The village club is contributing to the religious education of Kanubans through organized lectures and discussions on Islamic beliefs and practices related to religious events and occasions.

### Orthodox Rituals

Principal orthodox rituals, such as the five daily prayers, the Friday congregational prayer, the Ramadan night prayers, '*Id al-fitr*' (the fast-breaking feast), and '*Id al-adba*' (the feast of the sacrifice), have continued to be performed by the majority of the people. These rituals, however, now exclude the Sufi

*zikrs*, which were traditionally a part of them in Nubia. Some lesser orthodox commemorations have also continued, but they too have been modified to conform with the orthodox trend. Rituals of the eve of mid-Sha‘ban, the eve of the 27th of Ragab and the *Hijra* have all been modified by elimination of the accompanying *zikrs*.

*Salat al-gum‘a* (the Friday congregational noon prayer) represents a striking illustration of the nature of concrete change in orthodox rituals in Kanuba. The significance of change in this ritual is due not only to its centrality in Islam, its regular weekly performance, and its social function of increasing interaction among a large number of villagers, but it is also due to the conformity of change in the ritual to new conditions of village life.

The nature of the changes which have occurred in the Friday prayer reflect the trend towards Islamic orthodoxy—a modification of ritual to approximate its original Islamic form. This Islamization has been manifested primarily in the reduction and simplification of ritual content,<sup>15</sup> Qur’anic recital and *zika* performance, formerly major elements in the Friday prayer, are now eliminated. However, the Friday prayer ritual is still regular and continues to involve the entire male community.

A new feature of the present form of the ritual is that it provides some secular services. After the prayer, worshipers gather in an annex to the mosque for entertainment and social activities. This social gathering has replaced the *zika* which used to follow the prayer in Old Nubia. The secular post-service activities have also become an integral part of the community social life, because they stimulate people to attend the prayer and because they provide an opportunity for those who are away all week to interact with their community. As one informant said, “it is the only time in the week when all men are expected to be present.”

Despite the fact that the present form of the Friday ritual is a subject for divergent opinions and sometimes for conflict between the two religious groups in the village, the event is very significant for village life.<sup>16</sup> Important announcements on village affairs are made in this gathering to “reach everybody’s ear,” as one informant put it. Sometimes urgent matters requiring common consent are discussed and decided upon.<sup>17</sup>

The change to this present form of the ritual is attributed not only to the orthodox movement as informants commonly expressed, but also to the changing conditions of the community of Kanuba. For example, the modification of *salat al-gum‘a* has suited changes in the occupational system. Villagers working outside the village often return at weekends and are then able to fulfill some of their social obligations. Reducing the time devoted to

rituals has enabled young men to have enough time to arrange for afternoon sports and evening activities in which they like to take part.

The Islamic calendar still occasions many activities and gatherings which contribute to the continuity and maintenance of Nubian social life. These reflect the principles of village society and culture. For example, reciprocity is evident in ceremonial organization. Informants report that they attend because they view ritual performance as an occasion to earn merit as well as to associate with their fellow villagers. Women are excluded from ritual performances, just as they are from other community activities. They are, however, involved in ceremonial organization in preparing food or beverages. One exception to the general exclusion of women from public religious life is that, segregated from men by a curtain in the mosque, they can perform Ramadan evening rituals and the feast prayers. Neither racial nor social distinctions are considered in ritual organization, but ritual leadership is usually provided by the elders.

The mosque has continued to be the main center for practicing orthodox Islamic rituals. Its staff continues to be the same as in Nubia; the imam, *muezzin* (prayer caller), and caretaker. They are paid token salaries by the government and are regarded as men of *baraka* (blessing). The imam in particular is still viewed by the people as a religious symbol. Evidence of this is the fact that it is believed among Kanubans that the first to shake hands with the imam after prayer will receive more *baraka* than the others.

Thus, traditional Nubian orthodox beliefs and practices have continued to exist, but in modified form. They have become more significantly related to the everyday life of the community. Observation reveals that popular Islam has declined in the village, and orthodox religion has increased as a unifying force. Whenever the danger of social or religious disintegration is felt, orthodox religion has been manipulated to retain unity. Moreover, religion serves as a dynamic force for the community's aspirations to achieve fame as a model village in Egypt. Religious appeals have been made on several occasions to induce acceptance of innovations. A local project to form a cooperative society to collectively reclaim and cultivate land was reinforced by Qur'anic verses and the Prophet's sayings promoting cooperation. Attempts are also made to cope with religious beliefs which may inhibit innovations, as in the case of family planning.

### **Ceremonial Activities**

Ceremonial activities related to popular and/or pagan aspects of religion have also witnessed change in Kanuba. The *ziker*, which was an important part of

almost all orthodox and popular rituals, has been completely eliminated from such observances as the Friday prayer, or has become entirely secularized (as are the *zikers* occasionally performed during *karamas*). The *ziker* itself as an independent ritualistic activity has also lost its integrity in the Nubian religious system of Kanuba. The present form of the *ziker* is characterized by infrequency, irregularity, and a lack of traditional religious feeling. It has become a form of secular entertainment rather than a sacred matter. It is also less meaningful and integral; people no longer know its significance. Today, it is an adjunct of other activities and is not the principal reason for gathering (Kennedy and Fahim 1970).

Nile ceremonies have been completely eliminated, probably because the site of Kanuba is far from the river. Other ceremonies, such as Arab *maydur* and the popular *'ashura*, are declining. Arab *Maydur* designates the last Wednesday of the Muslim month of Safar, which is believed to be a bad day. To ward off any harm, soup dishes of boiled grain are exchanged in the neighborhood. *'Ashura* celebrates the assassination of Hussein, grandson of the Prophet; a dish made of cooked cereal called by the same name is usually exchanged in the neighborhood on that occasion.

The popular ceremony commemorating the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad, a universal feast day in Egypt, has continued. However, due to the relatively high cost of living and the absence of many village men, it has undergone some changes in organization and in the sacrifice with which it is associated. This occasion, once of festival dimensions, is now limited to a short secular *ziker*, and the number of animal sacrifices has been reduced to a minimal—one or two sheep for the entire village.

Pagan ceremonies related to the biological crises of life have also been radically changed and modified. Since the establishment of Kanuba, the traditional complex festivities accompanying male circumcision have been completely dropped. As the father of a boy who had recently been circumcised reported, "what happened exactly is that I went to my work in Daraw, and when I came back I found that the boy was circumcised. His mother and the barber had made the arrangements without my knowledge and with neither declaration nor public celebration."

Death and post-death rituals have also changed. These changes range from complete abolishment to simplification and reduction. For example, condolences to relatives of the deceased are held for only three days, in contrast to the fifteen days of earlier times. The memorial services for the dead at the cemetery four Thursdays after death, the fortieth day after death, and one year after death are no longer observed.

Shaykh cult beliefs and observances have also been modified. Shrine visits have been almost entirely eliminated. Shaykh tombs are nonexistent in the village itself, and the *Ansar al-sunna* exert control over members' mothers, wives, sisters, and relatives, whom they forbid from visiting such shrines in other villages.

*Zars* have also been abolished in Kanuba. Some women, however, still attend those held in neighboring villages, but their number is declining. *Higabs* are still utilized to a limited extent, as the evil eye concept continues to influence popular belief about illness and harm. However, the establishment of a medical clinic in Kanuba, along with the increasing level of education among the villagers and greater urban contacts, have resulted in a tendency toward reducing the degree of dependence upon this popular aspect of the Nubian religious system.

## Discussion

The presentation above indicated that many significant changes have occurred in the traditional Nubian religious system. The trend of change in Kanuba is not, however, uniformly toward secularism, as has been proposed by several writers analyzing probable developments in both Muslim and non-Muslim communities exposed to a more modern way of life. There is, rather, a trend toward Islamization: reinforcing the significance of the essentials of orthodox Islam for everyday village life despite the secular characteristics that have appeared in Nubian ceremonial activities. The orthodox trend has manifested itself in the approximation of Islamic orthodox ritualistic activities to their original form and the reduction of popular and pagan Nubian ceremonies.

Developments in other Muslim Middle Eastern communities reveal a similar trend. Ammar (1954), Gheith (1959), Barclay (1964), and others have found that religion in the communities they studied remains a significant force influencing behavior, despite changes in other institutions resulting from more intensive and direct contact with modern life. It is of interest, also, that Nubian communities recently resettled in Kom Ombo are witnessing similar, though accelerated, changes in religion.<sup>18</sup> Observation of these newly resettled Nubian communities indicates correlated changes among structural elements.

New residential patterns, along with economic burdens brought about by the removal to an area as yet unable to support settlers, has also affected the traditional Nubian ceremonial patterns.<sup>19</sup> There has been a tendency to minimize costs and simplify forms to adapt them to the drastic changes brought about by resettlement. Continuity or modification of ceremony

seem to have been determined, at least during the initial period of settlement (1964–69), by economic cost. That is, there has been a tendency to continue inexpensive practices such as regular orthodox rituals and to discontinue costly ones such as *zars* and *karamas* (Fahim 1968).

As in Kanuba, an important aspect of the religious system in New Nubia has been the growing conflict between the orthodox and popular Islamic groups. Although this conflict existed in Old Nubia on a very limited scale, it has become acute in the new setting. The closer and more intensive contact between New Nubia and urban centers, where the trend toward Islamization has been highly developed, has succeeded in gaining more support for orthodox-oriented Nubian groups. Support is provided also by promoters of the development of the new Nubian communities. This process of Islamization, then, appears to be closely interrelated with modernization.

Religion is playing an important role in the adaptation of Nubian settlers to life in Kom Ombo. It is being used to promote the notion of integration among the three Nubian ethnic groups (Kenuz, Arabs, and Mahasi), which were previously physically separated and linguistically different, and to promote the necessity for their assimilation to the neighboring non-Nubian groups. Unity among the Nubian population and assimilation into the national scene represent essential prerequisites to achieving the government's goal of bringing the Nubian population into the productive mainstream of the country. Nubians constitute a large proportion of the labor force in Aswan, and much is expected of them in contributing to local attempts at regional development.

To conclude, it appears then that despite changes occurring in some structural elements of the traditional religious system, religion remains of great significance to Nubian life. Our findings indicate that there is a great need to examine change as it is actually happening in Middle Eastern communities, instead of simply trying to apply theoretical propositions that have been developed or elaborated outside the context of concrete situations.

## Notes

- 1 The Kanuba study was designed and directed by John Kennedy, former research associate at the Social Research Center of the American University in Cairo. The author was then a principal research assistant. Acknowledgment should be made to Professor Kennedy and our colleagues Samiha El Katsha, Sohair Mehanna, and Omar Abdel Hamid, whose field notes supplemented our data on the Nubian religious system.

- 2 Change in aspects of Kanuba's social organization such as the economic and occupational structures (Kennedy 1966) and marriage customs (El Katsha 1969) has been described and analyzed.
- 3 One feddan = 1.038 acres.
- 4 Kenuz refer to the Mahasi group as 'Fadija.'
- 5 *Kuttab* is a one-classroom, single-instruction system by which children receive elementary knowledge of the Qur'an, the Arabic language, and arithmetic.
- 6 Nubians were converted to Christianity in the middle of the sixth century, and part of the region remained Christian until the fourteenth century, when Mamluk armies from Egypt overran Nubia and initiated Muslim rule.
- 7 This is how the term *dhikr* (remembrance) is rendered in the Egyptian dialect of Arabic.
- 8 Male circumcision has traditionally been an occasion for celebrations lasting several days and including different rituals. The male sex is favored among Nubians, as among other Islamic Middle Eastern communities, with such preference being justified by the notion that Islam rates men higher than women. A forty-year-old informant estimated the cost of his circumcision and associated celebration at LE100. (The estimated average annual income at that time ranged from LE60 to LE80 per family.)
- 9 The term *zar* refers to both ceremony and to a class of spirits
- 10 *Karama* refers here to a ceremony in which a group of men gather to eat and hold a *zikr* to praise the Prophet of Islam.
- 11 Conflict is traditionally resolved within the community. Taking a case outside the community is an admittance of the failure of its local political system.
- 12 This approach advocates Islam as practiced during the time of the Prophet Muhammad and his four immediate successors.
- 13 A systematic survey of women's involvement with religion in Kanuba was conducted by El Katsha and Mehanna.
- 14 There are daily religious lessons held in the mosque immediately after the evening prayer. Observation indicates that only about five or six men attend these lessons.
- 15 For a detailed comparison between the traditional and present forms of the Friday prayer, see Fahim (1966): 90–109.
- 16 The opposition group once entered the mosque with a transistor radio and, placing in near the pulpit, tuned into the Qur'anic recital broadcast from Cairo in an attempt to challenge current activities to change the traditional pattern of the prayer.
- 17 An example of such an occasion would be collecting dues or signatures for a common action and/or making the necessary arrangements to receive government officials.

- 18 In 1963, the construction of the Aswan High Dam necessitated the resettlement of all Nubian communities to the newly reclaimed land at Kom Ombo which became to be known as New Nubia.
- 19 In Nubia, neighborhoods tended to be based upon tribal affiliations and ceremonies were tribe-oriented. In New Nubia, the tribally based neighborhoods have disappeared, as the government assigned people to houses on the basis of family size rather than old neighborhood ties.

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## Problems of Nubian Migration

Mohamed Fikri Abdul Wahab<sup>\*</sup>

**T**he current migration and resettlement of the inhabitants of Nubia is considered one of the most important events of its kind in the history of the United Arab Republic. It represents a necessary displacement of people from their lands and homes caused by the construction of the High Dam, which will in a few months flood the whole of Nubia.

The planned migration and resettlement of the Nubians in the Kom Ombo area has in recent years opened the field for a variety of surveys and studies. The first of these studies was carried out by the Permanent Council for National Production Development during 1956 and 1957, and focused on the repercussions the High Dam project would have on the people of Nubia. A year later, the High Dam Service Committee, in conjunction with several ministries, undertook further studies related to housing projects and social assistance. These were followed in 1960 by an overall social survey of Nubia carried out by the Ministry of Social Affairs, which included a census of the Nubian population to determine who would be eligible for resettlement in the first stage of the migration operation.

By 1962, the Joint Committee for Nubian Migration, under the chairmanship of the undersecretary of state for the Ministry of Social Affairs and

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<sup>\*</sup>This was adapted from a 1964 draft paper, first presented at the Symposium on Contemporary Nubia, Aswan, January 27–29, 1964.

with representative members from other ministries, laid down a complete plan for the migration and resettlement of the Nubian people. In line with this plan, the committee assigned to each ministry a particular function to perform and coordinated the execution of these functions.

The studies carried out in Nubia, however, were largely statistical in nature, and were designed to gather census data in such a way that the results might be utilized to plan housing and social assistance for the migrants in their new settlement.

According to the original plan, the migration of the approximately 50,000 Nubian residents from Nubia was to start on October 18, 1963 and to be completed by the end of May 1964, which is the date set for the changing of the Nile's course. This will mean moving approximately three hundred Nubians daily and resettling them in the new area of Kom Ombo.

For those Nubians who will be moved during the first stage, 10,000 houses have already been completed and the remaining 7,000 are about to be finished. In addition, a further 8,000 houses have been earmarked for second stage settlers, mainly those who have been working and residing permanently outside Nubia during the past years.

The total agricultural land in the resettlement area is 35,000 acres of which 40 percent is to be cultivated initially. It is estimated that by 1966, after the new water pumps have been installed, the entire area will be cultivable.

Land in the resettlement areas will be distributed at the rate of two to five acres per family, so as to make every household head a landowner whether or not the family had originally owned agricultural land. The amount of land to be given to the family, however, depends on the size of the family itself.

Temporarily, it has been decided to give one acre of land to every farming family until the rest of the needed area is reclaimed.

A joint committee from the Ministries of Public Works and Agricultural Reform has been formed to determine the irrigation water rates, the desirable crop rotation plan, and the kind of crop that should be cultivated in the light of soil analysis and classification.

The villages of New Nubia carry the same names as those of Old Nubia, and contain twenty-nine mosques or *zawyas* for prayers, twenty-nine guest-houses, twenty-nine marketplaces, sixteen mechanical bakeries, four cooperative consumer societies, fifteen primary schools, seven public bath units, eighteen popular sports grounds, four public yards, four police stations, four public service combined units, and three preparatory schools.

The capital city of the new Nubia, 'Nasr,' will have a large club, a social unit, a police station, preparatory, secondary, and teacher training schools, and a central hospital.

In the resettlement project, three different types of housing blocks have been set up for the Nubians. These will be allotted according to the size of each migrant family:

**Type 1** Each house consists of two rooms, a small courtyard, an enclosure for cattle, as well as a kitchen and toilet facilities. It will be available for families composed of one to three members.

**Type 2** Each house consists of three rooms, a guesthouse, a medium-sized courtyard, an enclosure for the cattle, a kitchen, and toilet facilities. It will be available for families of four to five members.

**Type 3** Each house consists of four rooms, a guesthouse, a large courtyard, an enclosure for cattle, a kitchen, and toilet facilities. This is available to families consisting of six or more members.

### **The Actual Moving of Dabud**

As we shall in the next pages discuss the migration of Dabud, it might be relevant at this point to describe this village and the life of its people prior to migration.

The village of Dabud is part of the Kenuzi region and is the starting point of Nubia proper. At the time of migration its population totaled 1,223 resident persons composing 501 families.

Dabud is situated five kilometers south of the High Dam immediately to the north of Dahmit, and stretches on both sides of the Nile over an area of eighteen kilometers. It includes twenty-four *naga*'s populated mostly by women. This is in addition to another eight *naga*'s, which have remained empty since their inhabitants migrated in 1933 after the second raising of the Aswan Dam. These early migrants used the compensation money granted to them to build homes in the places where they moved and settled, such as Shaykh Fadl, in Kom Ombo, as well as al-Hakaroba, Shaykh Haroun, and al-Seil in Aswan. They have since broken all ties with their home villages and had not returned to them prior to the present migration operation when many came back for a last visit. Most of the farming in Dabud is done by women and children, and the majority of the men are engaged in sailing their boats between Halfa and Aswan, transporting dates and other goods. Very few men engage in farming during the summer months when, because the dam is open, it is possible, and those men find themselves unemployed during the entire winter season. In winter, women

raise poultry, while young girls engage in needlework and straw plaiting, the products of which are sold in the village.

Life in Dabud just prior to the move was very different from normal. As was true for the entire Kenuzi area, the citizens of Dabud did nothing except pack and ready themselves for moving. All of the merchant boatmen, who commute between Aswan and Halfa, as well as many of those urban Nubian 'emigrants' who had migrated and settled for many years outside Nubia, returned to Dabud to be present when the move took place. Some of these men had even resigned from their jobs in the hope of becoming farmers in the new resettlement area, while others apparently just came to assist their families in the move.

This might be a pertinent place to discuss the problem now faced by some of these urban Nubians, who did not return to their villages in 1960 when the census count of the whole area for compensation purposes took place. If they were not present in 1960 they are not entitled to resettlement in the first stage but are to be resettled later on during what is known as the second stage. This decision has caused some resentment. In the first place these people resent being referred to as 'emigrants.' They maintain that they never severed their relations with Nubia but were obliged to migrate from Nubia in pursuit of work as is the case with many other Egyptians who work away from their home villages but within the United Arab Republic. Had they found means of livelihood in Nubia, they argue, they would never have left. It is a fact that the majority of the Nubian village dwellers actually depend to a large extent on what the urban Nubians send them both in cash and in kind.

Fully aware of the complications their presence might cause, the authorities cautioned this urban-based group against coming to their village during the move in order to avoid unnecessary congestion. No heed was paid, however, to this request, and as the situation became more involved the authorities were obliged to forbid persons whose names were not included in the list of village inhabitants from boarding the boat at Aswan which would take them into Nubia. Though these men in many cases proved to be of great help to their families during the final preparations for the migrations, particularly women and aged men who had no able-bodied assistance, yet on the other hand, their presence, in Dahmit for example, also resulted in some economic difficulties. As these people were sent for by their village relatives, the latter felt obliged to extend hospitality to them. Each family had at least one or more extra members to feed, though monthly rations had not been increased, no vegetables were being cultivated, and poultry and cattle had been sold very

early in anticipation of the move. Moreover, the visiting migrants, certain that the migration would take place soon, had brought very little food with them.

The first migration took place on October 18, 1963, from the village of Dabud and involved 1,223 people, including 501 families with all their belongings and animals, transferred in four lots. It was very touching to see that the Nubians remembered their dead and prior to the embarkment sadly sprayed the graves with water—water being a symbol of abundance and mercy as it signifies growth and prosperity.

*Mulid* celebration is an essential feature of life in Dabud as in much of Kenuzi Nubian life. In order to fit in with the date on which the migration was to take place, the *mulid* of Sidi al-Hasan was held before its usual time. This particular *mulid* was celebrated by the entire population as it was the last one to be enjoyed in their old village. It was more impressive than any of the ones held before. The women of Nubia, generally, and more particularly in Dahmit, have great faith in the shaykhs, or saints. When the migration of Dahmit was postponed the old womenfolk maintained that the reason for the postponement was the fact that the shaykhs of al-Hasan and al-Hussein did not want the population to migrate before the *mulid*. Some also said that the reason for the postponement was that the saints did not want to leave the *naga*. Some of the people said they did not intend to transport the artifacts and remains of the shaykhs with them, but would be taking to the new settlement the banners, tambourines, and drums used for celebrating the *mulid*. They intend to continue celebrating the *mulids* on the usual dates but will not build any shrines unless the shaykhs express such a desire to someone in a dream.

Before embarking, each migrant family was given two types of subsidy: LE2 for luggage transportation expenses, and from LE2 to LE5 for living expenses, depending on the size of the family.

The migrants and their belongings were transported on Nile boats to Shallal, then by bus to the new area of resettlement. Their faces indicated mixed feelings both of hope and optimism, combined with a hidden fear of what the future would bring. However, most of them were clearly happy.

We feel that two major problems have arisen during this early migratory move. These two problems must have by now been satisfactorily solved. At the time, however, they had undesirable effects, and as such we feel that they are worthy of mention in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the overall picture.

The first of these problems was that no definite date had been set for the actual move. The villagers had been living in a continuous state of anxiety

as the approximate date of migration drew near, and as days passed and still no definite date had been set, worry and tension increased. In anticipation of the actual move there were many arrangements to be made, such as removing doors and windows to be sold or to be sent to their relatives in Aswan for storage until further transportation to the new settlement became possible. The date for the Dabud emigration was finally set for October 20, then, with only five days' notice it was advanced to October 18.

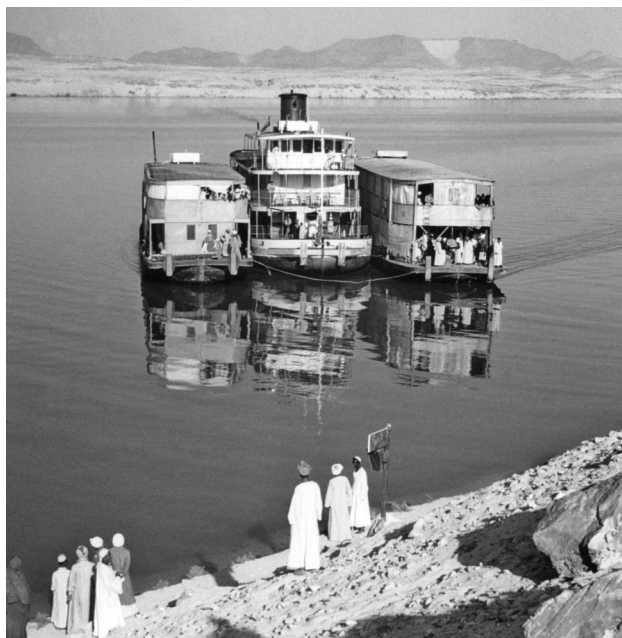
Because the citizens of Dabud did not know the exact date of moving they stopped economic and productive activities far too early.

The case of Dahmit was also complicated by a changing of dates. The first date set was December 7, and the people accordingly sold properties they would not be needing and packed their bags. Then suddenly the move was postponed until the 18th, with the promise that this would be definite. So the people got ready again for the 'big' day, and many of the 'emigrant' relatives took time off from their jobs and came to the village to help their families. Roofs, doors, and windows were removed. Blankets, except for a few light covers, were packed in addition to other clothing items, and food purchases were limited to the few days remaining. And then, just seven days before the arranged date, because the houses in the new resettlement areas had not been completed, the moving date was postponed again.

Another problem that faced the villagers concerned their animals. It must be remembered that sheep, goats, and cows represent not only a good source of income for the Nubian but also of nourishment for the old and the very young. The rumor was spread that the responsible authorities would take the livestock, put them in quarantine and not give them back to their owners except after a long period. The people were not happy about this because, they said, in the new settlement their women would not have any work to do, and unless they had their animals to tend there would be a great deal of gossip and disputes. Moreover, they did not see the reason for removing the animals, particularly since further rumors claimed that the animals would not be returned until all of the land in New Nubia became cultivable. Thus most people rushed to slaughter or sell their livestock at very cheap prices for fear that they would die in quarantine. A minority, however, transported their animals through the mountains to their relatives in Aswan, to be further transported to the new resettlement areas later. After the migration of Kashi-tumna Sharq and Dabud, rumors were spread by those returning from visits to the resettlement areas that most of the animals that were kept in quarantine had died of neglect. This rumor spread with amazing speed through more than one village, though no one could pin down the original source.



31. River boats at 'Aniba landing.



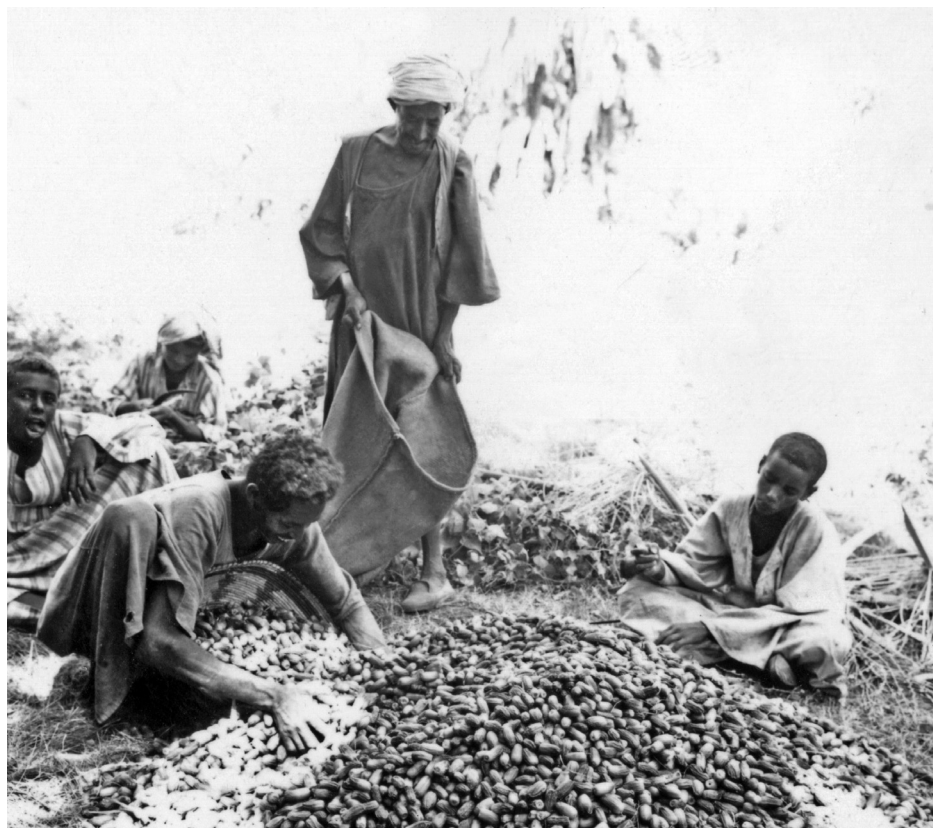
32. Post boat. A vital part of Nubian life, the weekly steamer connected all Nubian villages, bringing and taking passengers, money, and news.



33. A felucca carrying a cow across the Nile, near Ferkundi, north of Ballana.



34. A merchant boat bringing goods to Ismailiya. Such boats moored for a few days at a time near a village to sell their wares: canned goods, olives, cheese, cloth, needles, and small trinkets.



35. Measuring dates for division.



36. Sacks of dates  
being loaded for  
transport to Aswan.



37. Boy Scouts, Ismailiya, going to the express boat to meet an official from Aswan.



38. Muezzin in Ismailiya: Mohammed Ahmed calls the evening prayer during Ramadan.



39. Women getting water from the river in Ismailiya, Ballana. They carried the water up to their houses as often as six times a day.



40. Women on the banks of the Nile, Ballana.



41. Washing laundry, Ismailiya.



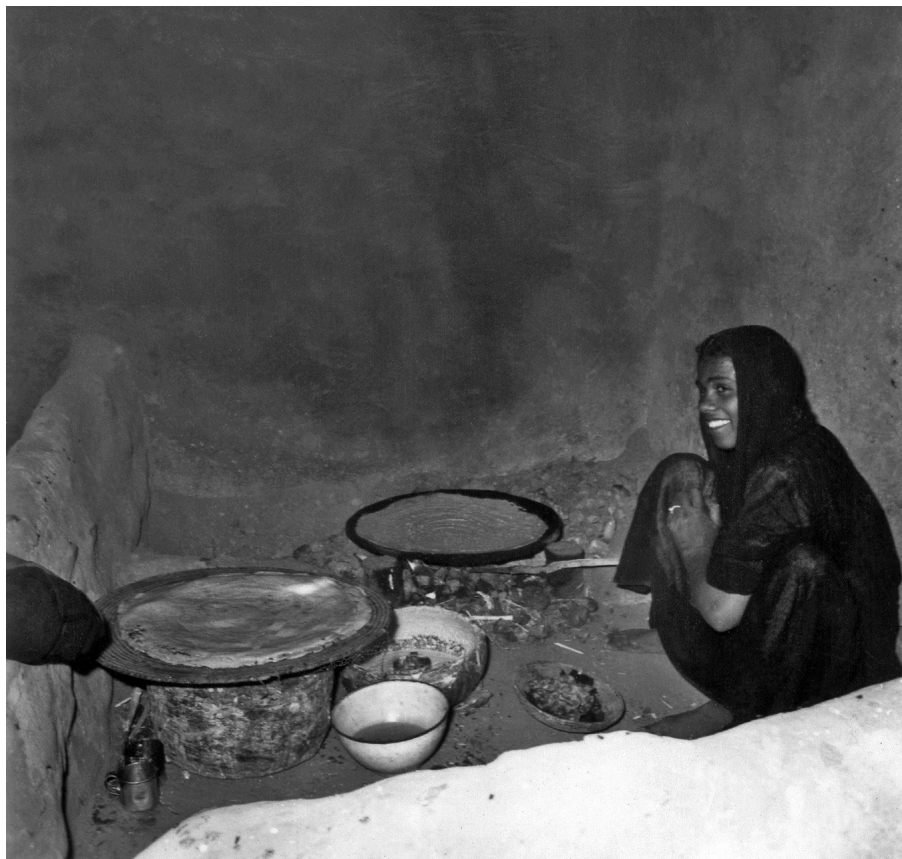
42. Women plastering the floor and walls of their house.



43. Boys playing the jumping game of *warjay* in front of team headquarters, Ismailiya.



44. Migrant Kenuz woman sewing in Ballana.



45. Cooking in Ismailiya.



46. Young women at a marriage, Fadija zone.



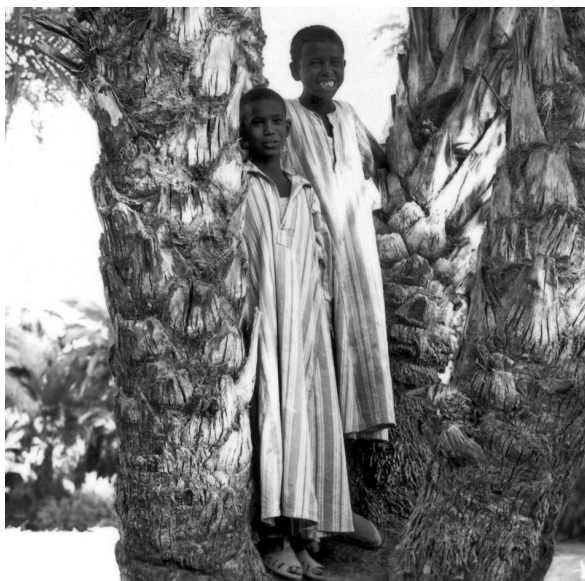
47. Farming in a small field among the rocks above the 121-meter flood line in Dahmit.



48. An elder in a Nubian village.



49. A man of Nubia.



50. Two boys in  
a doum palm.



51. Hussein Fahim (right) working on Shatr Shalashil's life history, Dar al-Salam.



52. Clockwise from bottom left: Hussein Fahim, John Kennedy, and Omar Abdel Hamid in Daraw headquarters.



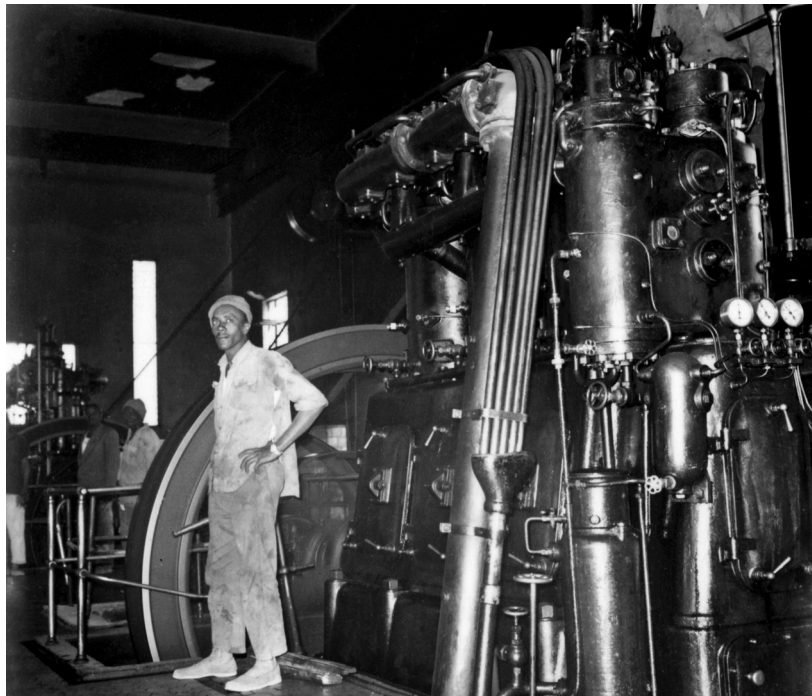
53. *Saqiya* in Adindan.



54. The upper wheel of a *saqiya*.



55. The flow of water from a *saqiya*.



56. Government irrigation pumping station in Ballana.



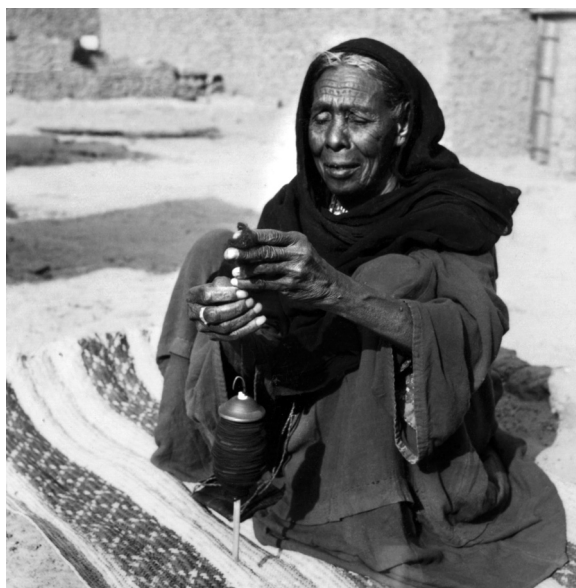
57. Young girls in the fields.



58. Teenage girls.



59. Dancing during  
Shilshil *mulid*, Dahmit.  
People come from all  
*naga's*; for this one a  
singer came from Dabud.



60. Old woman spinning.

61. Men dancing  
at a *mulid*.



62. Women dancing  
at a *mulid*.



If the authorities had been able to clarify these rumors, their undesirable effects could have been avoided.

It was very interesting to observe the attitudes of the different groups toward migration itself. For years they had known that the day would come when they would be forced to leave their homes and settle down in an area which, in spite of all the planning efforts made by the government, would still be strange and foreign.

In general we can say that the Dabud people had a favorable attitude toward migration although there were interesting variations between sex and age groups. The minority who felt negative about the whole thing came mostly from old age groups, especially those who had never left Nubia; the young men and women were most enthusiastic. The resentment of the older people toward migration seemed to be directly linked with their resettlement in Upper Egypt and the consequent necessity of contacts with Upper Egyptians. Whatever they were told about the advantages of migration, they felt it cannot substitute for the security that they felt in their own homeland among their own people, despite the rocky mountains and arid land they had to contend with.

On the other hand, the youth and some of the old look forward to migration as a means of breaking with old traditions, a way of gaining contact with the outside world where new educational and occupational opportunities and proper medical care are available, and communications are easier. Those who have been working outside Nubia have begun to think of leaving their jobs in order to take advantage of the new opportunities in both manufacture and agriculture, and at the same time be reunited with their families.

The women in Dabud generally welcomed migration, and in Dahmit when the date of migration was postponed the womenfolk were the most disappointed. Part of their eagerness may be due to the stories about cities that they have heard from other women who have lived in Cairo and Alexandria. But, although the subject is never openly discussed or admitted, the principal reason migration appeals to these women is that the move essentially means reunion with their husbands who work outside Nubia and the resumption of a normal family life. Divorced women also welcome migration in the hope that it will bring greater opportunities of remarriage than are available in Old Nubia.

It was interesting to observe the cooperation among the Nubian population during the final preparations for embarkation. In Dabud cooperation seemed limited to families, who helped each other, even where the family was dispersed over more than one *naga*. But in Dahmit, cooperation between tribes was quite evident, even where the tribes were spread out over several

*naga*'s. In either case, however, we cannot say that there was any clear inter-village cooperation.

The move created a new kind of Nubian merchant, one whose profits came from buying the wood of windows, doors, and the like after the houses were dismantled. In Dabud and Dahmit the people preferred to sell this wood to related merchants rather than to non-relatives. More than one woman merchant appeared in Dahmit, buying the wood and sending it to Aswan to be sold; these also traded in goats and sheep. As merchants made good profits, some of the Cairo Nubians who did not hold regular jobs in Cairo took up this new trade.

On arrival at the new settlements the Nubians were very happy with the care they received from the authorities. There were, however, some things that disturbed them.

Firstly, the housing pattern (according to family size) resulted in some discontent. This arrangement meant not only the dispersion of people coming from the same *naga*', but also from the same family. This of course was very difficult for the Nubians to accept, as their traditional pattern has been for members of the family to build houses adjacent to each other, so as to be near in cases of need. For example, when a family member received a guest, all relatives share in offering him hospitality so that the burden does not fall on that member alone. More important, a man working outside Nubia who could previously leave his wife and children in the care of his cousins without having to worry about them will not feel secure in so doing in the new setting.

The Nubians have therefore addressed requests to the authorities for reconsideration of this aspect of contiguity, so that the traditional residence pattern may be maintained. The authorities are responding favorably and are sparing no effort in taking the Nubian request into consideration.

Secondly, some of the first things that struck the arriving migrants were the mechanical bakeries and cooperative societies which had been made ready in the new villages for the benefit of the migrants. The cooperative societies were fully equipped with all types of canned food, tea, soap, and so on, but did not have enough of the staple foodstuffs the Nubians actually consume. For instance, on the day following the migration, the people found neither cheese nor *halawa* in the shops and these items are more essential than any type of canned food as they are inexpensive and can thus cover an entire family's meal at low cost. Another point to be considered is that Nubians in their original villages were in the habit of purchasing all their needs from shops or cooperative societies on credit, their accounts being settled as soon as the remittances from relatives, and so on, were received. For

these reasons they now suggest that a native Nubian be placed in charge of these grocery shops in the new settlement: not only would he be more familiar with the foodstuffs needed by his people, but he would also be more favorable to allowing reasonable credit arrangements.

Mention must also be made of the mechanical bakeries set up in the village. One month after their arrival, most of the Dabud people have given up buying the bread produced there and now bake their own traditional bread at home.

During a visit to Dabud, one month following migration, it was very striking to observe that the menfolk were not occupied in any activity whatsoever, but spend their days sitting in front of their houses. This was also true for the women, except those who attend the embroidery workshop. In fact, the only men from Dabud who have jobs are the four who rented the cooperative society and the other three shops.

This is not the case in Kashtumna Sharq. Most of the men work there as butchers, vegetable vendors, store owners and as car drivers (between the villages, Kom Ombo, and Daraw). They have found themselves jobs that provide income, and they do not sit around idly depending on the subsidy of the Ministry of Social Affairs. The vegetable and kerosene peddlers now in Dabud are not Nubians, but come from neighboring Upper Egyptian villages. At first the Dabud people did not even allow them to enter their village, and the peddlers had to wait outside the village for buyers to go to them.

Moreover, up till one month after resettlement, the people of Dabud shied away from strangers, even from the Ga'afra tribe, Arabs who are more related to the Nubians than they are to Upper Egyptians. We were told by some informants that the inhabitants of Fatira village, who are mainly Ga'afra, invited the newcomers to lunch as a step towards becoming acquainted. The Dabud people declined. However, a few days later, when the Kashtumna Sharq people arrived, these Ga'afra extended the invitation again to both Kashtumna Sharq and Dabud. Both villages then accepted. This is a small but important first step towards the establishment and maintenance of social relations with other ethnic groups in the area.

The day following the move, the Ministry of Social Affairs opened an embroidery workshop in the new village of Dabud to train women and young girls in some kinds of needle and straw work. From the outset, Nubian girls from Dar al-Salam were appointed to teach these handicrafts. Because Nubian girls have been employed to teach in the workshop, the men have allowed their wives and daughters to attend it, in their spare time. In Old Nubia men never let their daughters go to school beyond the age of ten.

## **Conclusion**

We cannot at this stage determine exactly the extent of social change that has already taken place in New Nubia. Nor can we predict the developments that will take place in the future, in view of the short time which has elapsed since the Nubians arrived in their new settlements. We can, however, conclude that the Nubians are generally happy and enthusiastic about their new homeland and the care given them by the state. This fine beginning to such a large-scale migration operation is indeed an achievement and has set the stage for further measures contemplated by the state toward realizing more social and economic stability for the Nubians in their new homeland.

# **Cross-Cultural Resettlement Administration**

## **An Exploration of Potential Problems of Nubian Resettlement**

Robert A. Fernea \*

**P**ersuading people to leave their homes and introducing them to a new life in a new environment is at best a difficult undertaking. When the new environment is virgin territory that must be developed and utilized to its full potential for the good of the country and the settlers, the project takes on national as well as local significance. All the technical problems must be fully considered in advance and planning in these areas undertaken only after careful study. Of no less importance, however, are the social problems of resettlement: the human factor will very likely measure success or failure. Yet it is this human factor that is most often neglected in preparation for resettlement.

Of course it may be argued that all plans made for such projects are made for people. But it is one thing to make plans for people and quite another to make plans about people, plans which proceed from an understanding of the habits and potentialities of the people to be resettled, plans which shape technological development with this understanding in view. It is to the social circumstances surrounding Nubian resettlement that this paper is directed, not in an attempt to predict future Nubian behavior in Kom Ombo but only to suggest for further discussion some features of present behavior that officials

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\*This was adapted from a 1962 draft paper in the SRC files.

responsible for resettlement may wish to consider. These observations are based on sympathetic observations of Nubian life made in the course of an ethnological study of Nubia, the results of which remain to be analyzed.

Rural resettlement has historically taken two forms. One is that familiar during frontier days in the United States and more recently in new irrigated lands in western North America. In such cases, families have voluntarily chosen to leave their homes and jobs to take up life in a new region. Pushed by dissatisfaction with their old life and pulled by what appear to be fresh opportunities in virgin lands, the people making such moves are usually highly motivated and often need little administrative assistance to establish themselves. Even when there is government aid for such moves, these self-selected pioneers are frequently willing to endure great hardships to justify their initial decisions and make their resettlement successful. Not infrequently families fail to wrest a living from the soil in the unfamiliar and difficult circumstances, but clearly it is their failure and not the government's since they were the ones who decided to make the move.

The second form of resettlement comes about through circumstances beyond the control of the settlers. Government projects, particularly the building of dams, may flood occupied areas of land and forcing many people to give up their homes and farms. Under such conditions, the agency undertaking such a project generally assumes some responsibility for compensating those adversely affected either by paying them for their lost property or providing them with new homes and farms elsewhere. In the case of the Nubians, the United Arab Republic government will be providing them with lands potentially superior to those now occupied.

The major difficulty with this type of resettlement, however, stems from the fact that the people who are obliged to move generally feel no responsibility for what is happening to them. Not having been asked to move in the first place, they may feel that it is up to others to solve all their problems for them and may be inclined to be very critical of all that is done in their behalf. Their morale can be easily undermined and they can 'give up' and refuse to help themselves in the new environment where, had they initially wanted to move, they might have tried harder to make a success of resettlement.

In short, people who are obliged to resettle because of events over which they have little or no control may feel little or no responsibility for making a success of resettlement according to plans drawn up for them by others. While there is no certain solution for this problem, it is the basis for a strong argument that those who are to be moved be included in the planning stages of resettlement insofar as is possible. This means more than token exchanges

of information and comment; ideally it might mean appointing older and more experienced representatives of the settlers to the committees responsible for resettlement planning, permitting them to help shape the plans and participate in decision-making. By being a party to the resettlement planning, these settlers, in this case the Nubians, may not only make valuable contributions from their knowledge of their own people, but also may come to feel more responsible for the success of the plans they have helped to make.

The argument for Nubian participation in the planning of their resettlement is strengthened by the fact that during and after relocation Egyptians will be directly involved in Nubian affairs to a degree never before experienced in the modern history of either group. In fact, the history of Nubia is generally one of semi-independence from the ruling centers of Egypt. In both ancient and modern times, as long as Nubia remained peaceful and paid taxes to sovereign authorities in Lower Egypt, it was usually permitted to exist as a kind of buffer state between Egypt and Africa, looking after its own internal affairs. Even since Nubia became completely within the administrative orbit of Egypt, the small population, scarce resources, and great distance from Cairo have discouraged government activity in this region. Nubia was, for instance, one of the last regions of Egypt to be reached by public education and Nubian men were not accepted for military service until the comparatively recent past. Thus in the case of Nubians, Cairo officials will lack the long history of administrative relationship which exists with the fellahin.

Even today most Nubians have little direct contact with Egyptian officials. Most administrators rarely leave their headquarters in 'Aniba and many isolated communities seldom if ever have a stranger visit them—a fact encouraged by the absence of roads and the necessity of making all trips by boat or on donkeyback. Thus, Nubians, while looking forward to an increase in social services with pleasure, at the same time are somewhat apprehensive about what they fear may be a loss of independence through increased administrative control.

The UAR government has already allayed these fears to some extent by planning Nubian resettlement so as to create a physically separate Nubian community near Kom Ombo. By so doing the government has implicitly recognized that the Nubians are a socially and culturally distinct group even while being loyal citizens of the UAR. It is, however, desirable that the consequences of this recognition be given full consideration by those who will be responsible for the administrative aspects of resettlement. Basically this involves recognizing that, as the Nubians are a distinct group within the

Egyptian nation, they cannot be successfully administrated in exactly the same way as the Fellahin of the Delta or the Sa'idi of Upper Egypt. What would constitute successful resettlement in one case might not in another.

Unfortunately, it is not easy for government planners and administrators to take into account the distinctive characteristics of a group like the Nubians, which may eventually cause problems in resettlement. In the case of Nubian resettlement (as in many other cases) the responsible government officials come from a different cultural tradition. The technical information and 'common sense' on which they must rely in making their plans involve, to a large extent, the assumption that the people they are planning for would do what they, the planners, would do in a similar situation. Assuming that the Nubians will behave similarly to people from the Delta is very risky. For, of all the factors involved in resettlement—engineering, agricultural, economic and social, it is the human factor that is least predictable. Again, this is another reason for suggesting that qualified Nubians henceforth be included on the committees officially responsible for resettlement. We shall go on to mention some aspects of Nubian attitudes and institutions which may be worthy of administrative consideration.

The increase in the number and intensity of relationships between Egyptian administrators and Nubians will undoubtedly be accompanied by many disagreements and disputes in the early days of resettlement, through factors beyond the control of either group. If such disputes arise, it will be important for the parties to recognize one another as individuals, and not in terms of stereotypes. (Stereotypes are set ideas that the members of one group have about the members of another group. Such set ideas are applied indiscriminately to all members of the group in spite of the fact that they may be true of few if any of the people involved.) Nubians have certain stereotypes about Egyptians and Egyptians also exhibit certain set ideas about Nubians. Both groups will need to recognize these notions as the product of insufficient familiarity and understanding.

The Nubian stereotype concerning Egyptians is in some ways similar to pre-revolutionary foreign ideas about Egyptians, a fact that is perhaps not too surprising when we consider that many older members of the Nubian community spent most of their lives working for foreigners. In spite of their enthusiasm for the goals of the Republic and for the leaders of modern Egypt, Nubians often express derogatory ideas about Egyptians. Inefficiency and desire for personal gain are most often mentioned. Any difficulties the Nubians experience in dealing with Egyptian government officials are usually explained in terms of these personality characteristics

which they associate with Egyptians, and little account is taken of the intrinsic complexity of the administrative problem. Whether a product of Egyptian manufacture or an Egyptian official proves unsatisfactory, the likely attitude is a shrug of the shoulders, and the remark '*shogbul Arabu,*' or '*gypsi.*' If Egyptian administrators do not wish Nubians to hold them personally responsible for every difficulty and inconvenience during and after relocation, serious efforts will have to be made to establish relationships of friendship and trust between administrators and the leaders of the Nubian community. If such trust and friendship can be established, explanations of administrative problems will be sympathetically received.

On the other hand, most Egyptians know Nubians merely as servants in wealthy homes or as waiters in hotels and restaurants. The result of this limited knowledge is frequently summed up in the tern '*barabra*' which many Egyptians apply to Nubians and which Nubians resent very much. This name implies that Nubians are not quite civilized nor in any way as sophisticated as Egyptians. Furthermore, it is common to be told that Nubians are essentially 'lazy' and will not work hard. Those claiming to know more about Nubians also announce that they do not know how to farm. Thus the Egyptian view of Nubians is as misinformed as the Nubian view of Egyptians when universally applied to either group.

Such stereotypes are a very poor basis upon which to establish satisfactory administrative relationships between Egyptians and Nubians in Kom Ombo. Egyptians who work with Nubians for the first time are likely to find as much variation in Nubian personality and personal experience as would be found among any group of Egyptians. In fact, a basic problem of Nubian administration will be to strike a successful balance between recognizing what is uniquely true of Nubian institutions and behavior on the one hand, and understanding that there is a great deal of variation between individual Nubians (and groups of Nubians) on the other.

Take, for instance, the variation in sophistication and knowledge of the world at large found among Nubians. Many Nubian men have spent years of their lives working in the homes of wealthy and influential men in Cairo, serving and observing tourists and upper-class Egyptians in public places or working in private and government offices. They have learned a great deal about the working of Egyptian society and the world at large even if their information is fragmentary and unsystematic. Other Nubian men, by chance or preference, have spent all or most of their lives in Nubia farming or supervising the cultivation of their own land and the land of their relatives working in Cairo. It is not surprising then, that within the same village are

men who have much interest in and knowledge of national and world affairs, and men whose range of interest and information is generally limited to their own community. But because Nubians have travelled so much between Nubia and Cairo, some of them are among the most sophisticated rural residents in Egypt.

A corollary to this situation is that some Nubians have little or no experience or taste for farming, and other men who have spent most of their lives in Nubia have become quite experienced and devoted farmers. It is true that traditional farming techniques in Nubia were very simple, involving little actual cultivation of the soil beyond scattering seeds and subsequent harvesting of millet crops grown on the annual alluvial deposits, but since the establishment of irrigation projects in Nubia in 1933 many Nubians have been given the opportunity to learn about and practice more modern agricultural techniques. Many Nubians admit that they learned how to farm from Sa'idis who came to work in Nubia as sharecroppers after 1933, however, they have in many cases learned their lessons very well and exhibit both a taste and ability for modern truck farming. Thus it is not unusual to find in the same family one brother who is a devoted and practiced farmer, and other brothers with only a superficial idea of the art of cultivation. In areas where irrigation projects have not been established, Nubian communities have little opportunity to practice more than the simple summertime millet cultivation. This is because they have almost no fertile land for most of the year. However, it is as wrong to consider all Nubians ignorant of contemporary farming practices as it is to feel they are all unsophisticated country folk.

Nubians in many cases practiced farming, but a majority of them may be more interested in owning land than actually farming it themselves when they first go to Kom Ombo. There are good reasons why this is so. Nubia has probably always been a region that produced more people than the land could support, forcing a certain percentage of the adult population to seek work elsewhere in Egypt or the Sudan. This condition of land scarcity was of course much intensified by the building and heightening of the dam at Aswan at the beginning of the century. Thus it was absolutely necessary that when several brothers inherited a few feddans from their father, all but one of the brothers seek work in Cairo. Today a very common pattern of behavior is to find one brother living in Nubia, looking after the families' land and houses and in many cases the wives and children of his brothers working in the city. The latter send money for the support of their families and allow their brother at home to grow such crops as the land will allow. The produce is distributed

among the relatives. It was and is simply not possible for all Nubian men to be farmers. And, as a result of this environmentally imposed situation, many Nubian men now have no taste for farming—a development which has grown out of necessity. Thus many Nubian men living now in Nubia do not actually farm themselves but sharecrop with a farming relative or with other Nubians or Sa'idis who are willing and able to undertake such work.

It is obvious that all Nubians moving to Kom Ombo cannot be expected to become farmers immediately, even though they will all be interested in owning land as an investment. While it is undoubtedly essential from the government's point of view that the land which is being so expensively prepared for cultivation in Kom Ombo become and remain productive as a condition of continued ownership, many Nubian men may continue to prefer to sharecrop with other Nubians or even Sa'idis rather than do the actual farming themselves. The idea of sharecropping on a resettlement project may seem contradictory to the ideas of modern agrarian reform, but the history of the Nubians and their difference from other Egyptian peasants must be taken into account in considering the total agricultural situation.

In the Delta, the practice of sharecropping grew out of a feudalistic situation in which foreigners acquired control of large areas of land and obliged fellahin to work on the land for a share of the crop. Here great social and class differences usually existed between the rich landowner and the poor sharecropper, and the landowner often ruled his estate as if it were a kingdom unto itself, in many cases having little regard for the welfare of his peasants. In Nubia, the landowner and the sharecropper are frequently relatives who have jointly inherited a small piece of land, which cannot support the entire family. Or a man who has worked most of his life in Cairo may return to live in Nubia once his sons are old enough to help support him and may supervise the farming of their property by other Nubians or Sa'idis. Rarely, however, is the 'Supervisor' much richer than the person who is doing the farming, and frequently the farmer comes and lives with the landowner's family, participating in all family activities as a member. Thus there is little if any class distinction, which existed in the Delta region, associated with sharecropping in Nubia. The practice of farming for a share of the crop is present, but the context of this practice is entirely different.

It may be argued that the reason for this practice will no longer exist in Kom Ombo when each family will have enough land to support itself, but even if the situation can be changed overnight, the attitudes and customs which have developed historically in Nubia cannot change so rapidly. Therefore, rather than be too concerned with who is actually cultivating

Nubian farms—the owner or someone else—it might be wiser at first to insist only that the land be cultivated and not be allowed to lie idle. When Nubians discover how profitable sugar-cane farming may be, they may decide to take over the actual work of farming, but it will cause much less trouble if they are allowed to come to this decision independently, rather than being threatened with loss of their land for not farming it themselves. In short, if the eagerness and delight with which other Egyptian peasants accept and work a piece of land of their own are not matched by the Nubians, there are obvious historic and cultural reasons for this difference. Nubians may not have had much land historically, but what they have had they have generally owned themselves, and the arrangements for cultivating it have been their own, not imposed from outside.

Social control is another area of Nubian custom and practice that might well be taken into account by future administrators of the new communities. Social control denotes the regulation of individual behavior to prevent or suppress conduct that threatens the peace of a community.

To exaggerate somewhat, it might be said that the communities of the world can be divided into two groups: those that are self-regulating—preferring and able to control themselves, and those that generally carry all their problems to outside authorities for judgment and action. Typically, if not universally, Nubian communities prefer to settle their problems themselves and generally they seem successful in doing this. If, for instance, a low rate of crime is found in Nubia, it is probably because Nubians are in general a peaceable and honest people, but also because even when dishonest acts occur the people involved put matters right in their own way rather than reporting the matter to the police or taking the disagreement to the courts. There is a strong preference in most Nubian communities for limiting knowledge of dishonesty and disputes to as few persons as possible. Thus, older members of the same families may force their disputing members to be reconciled, or the village men may meet after Friday prayers to judge and resolve disagreements. When this group fails, the problem may be taken to the *'umda* who, with other Nubians informally or formally appointed, may sit in judgment on the problem. But to take a local problem to the police (except in extreme cases) or other non-Nubian officials is felt to be an admission of failure on the part of the entire community. It is, of course, through consensus and the force of public opinion that individuals are obligated to submit to the judgment of their peers, but this is an exceedingly effective instrument of social control in the small, semi-isolated communities such as are typical of Nubia today.

The administrator may find it to his advantage to encourage this self-governing tendency in Nubian life. In so doing, he would avoid being overburdened with the kind of minor administrative problems that frequently interfere with the more important tasks of provincial officials.

However, in encouraging continued self-regulation in the resettled Nubian communities, allowances will have to be made for the new problems Nubians will be facing when their living space is reduced from approximately three hundred kilometers of valley to about thirty kilometers. This reduction will greatly increase the density of population and will mean that many people who in the past were distant neighbors with slight knowledge of each other will now be seeing each other every day and participating in each others' affairs. We have said that Nubian social controls operate through consensus and public opinion, but these instruments depend upon shared experiences and knowledge of one another which can come about only through a period of living together in relatively close association. While the Nubian population already shares common standards and values to some degree, it will take some time for these to be reaffirmed under the new living conditions that will follow resettlement. The government may find it in its own interest to encourage and allow for this development. It is surely a tribute to Nubian self-regulation that the strong factionalism which frequently divides the Delta villages and the longstanding feuds that characterize Sa'idi relations are not often found among the Nubians.

Furthermore, while consensus operates successfully in matters of social control within communities, it operates slowly as a means of mobilizing people for cooperative action. This is an important consideration if administrators contemplate requesting the new Nubian villages to undertake action on government-initiated suggestions. For Nubian society is not hierarchically organized; that is, it does not have within it people of special status who pass down to others orders which must be carried out. Even older people are careful not to order younger people about too much, and when a respected member thinks members of the community should do something together, he takes time to convince them this is desirable. He does not order his fellow Nubians about. So before they undertake any action which requires the cooperation of the community as a whole, administrators must allow the recognized local leaders enough time to discuss such an action with the other members of the community, mobilizing opinion and support for it. To attempt to force action too quickly within these communities may undermine the traditional fabric of Nubian village life.

The administrators selected to deal with the many problems mentioned above must be of the high caliber typical of modern Egyptian government. Whether or not it is true, Nubians in general believe that in the past administrative officials sent from Cairo to Nubia have either been inexperienced or have been persons who, for one reason or another, the government wished to have out of the way. If true, this has not encouraged high morale among such administrators nor has it improved Nubian opinion of Egyptian civil servants. This makes it all the more important that the first people to have contact with the settlers at Kom Ombo be anxious to establish good relations with the Nubians. Morale among the officials must be high and contradiction and confusion in administration must be kept to a minimum.

If we look at other resettlement projects in the world, we see that some of the most successful have been those for which an independent administrative authority has been established by government decree. Such an agency can develop and train its own personnel, has its own budget, and does not directly depend on other ministries or departments of the central government. The officials of such agencies are not just on loan from some section of the government but accept their job of administering resettlement projects with the knowledge that this is the type of work they will be doing for a long time. Such persons may be willing to invest more of themselves in such work than if they are merely 'on loan' from an office in the capital of the country. The settlers themselves are less confused by such an authority as they know who is responsible for their welfare; in fact there is little opportunity for anyone to be confused as to where responsibility for the success of resettlement lies.

Even if the Nubian settlement at Kom Ombo does not need agency administration for more than a few years and will eventually become part of the ordinary governmental structure found in any other set of villages, such an agency could be a nucleus and training ground in resettlement administration. Since the Nubian resettlement program is only one of many such projects envisaged in the UAR, it may be a useful example on which to mold future projects of this kind.

# Initial Adaptations to a New Life for Egyptian Nubians

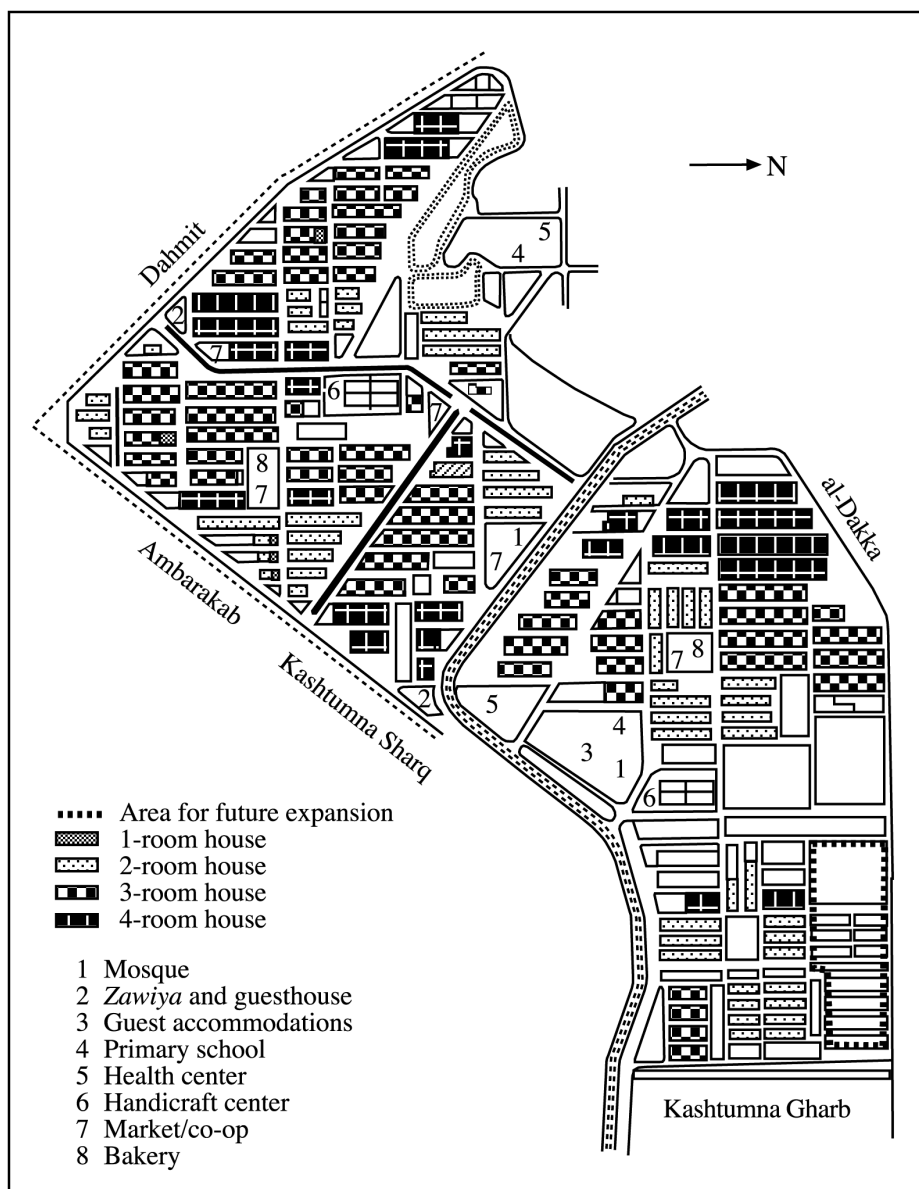
Robert A. Fernea and John G. Kennedy\*

In the fall of 1963 the United Arab Republic (UAR) began the orderly relocation of all the Nubian communities along the Nile between Aswan and the Sudanese border, a move necessitated by the construction of the High Dam and involving a population of nearly 50,000 persons. In this report we will describe some of the social adaptations made by the Nubians during their first year of resettlement, attempting to show the interplay between external conditions, determined both by the government and the new environment, and the creative and culturally channeled responses to these conditions on the part of the Nubians.<sup>1</sup>

While traditional culture must underlie and in general determine the kinds of social adaptations that occur, predictions of particular responses to radically altered environmental conditions are nearly impossible in the present state of our knowledge. Perhaps this lack of predictability comes partly from the fact that few studies have been made of processes of change as they happen. Most studies of sociocultural change have been comparisons of a known present with a reconstructed past or, occasionally, studies of the same group at two or more widely separated points in time. Thus, the tortuous

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Map 8: The agglomeration into a contiguous settlement of five Nubian districts including New Dahmit, New Nubia, 1970s. Note rectilinear street plan and distribution of house types. Based on a map in Serageldin 1982, ultimately from the Ministry of Housing.

paths that have led to a particular sociocultural configuration often remain largely inferential. In this case, while it has been impossible to have a full-scale research project in the field during the entire resettlement process, the Social Research Center (SRC) of the American University in Cairo (AUC) has been in constant contact with the Nubian people for a period of almost five years.

Many of the changes that we describe are still taking place, and at this close range we may be mistaken in our identification of the more important trends; yet it seems plausible that this early period may be critical in the crystallization of the patterns and directions of later changes.

A description of the Nubians' first experimental attempts at adaptation should prove useful for later studies of social change in the new settlement.

### **Before Resettlement**

From a narrow ribbon of sparsely populated and isolated villages lying along the Nile for a distance of approximately three hundred kilometers, the Nubian population was resettled in planned, compact, contiguous settlements in an area beginning twenty-five kilometers north of Aswan (near Kom Ombo) and extending north about fifty kilometers (see map 8). The resettlement area has not been cultivated within modern times, but its alluvial deposits can be reclaimed through pump irrigation. The Egyptian government has undertaken this reclamation, but it cannot provide an adequate economic basis for New Nubia until the completion of the High Dam.

This lack of farmland does not, however, represent a radical change for most of the Nubian communities. With the construction of the first Aswan dam in 1902 and its subsequent heightenings in 1912 and 1933, the Nubians progressively suffered a drastic loss of their famous stands of palm trees, their numerous waterwheels, and their small but fertile fields. In Old Nubia, significant year-round agriculture existed only in the southernmost communities, where the dam reservoir did not greatly affect the cultivable area, and in four places where the government installed pumping stations to permit cultivation of small alluvial basins.

The annual opening and closing of the dam and the natural rise and fall of the Nile did permit cultivation in most areas for short periods of the year. Small herds of livestock replaced dates as a major local source of cash income in many parts of Old Nubia, since there was often time enough to grow fodder even when there was insufficient time for human food crops to mature. Nevertheless, progressive overall reduction of agricultural production forced ever greater numbers of Nubians to seek employment in urban

areas.<sup>2</sup> As a result, the ratio of males to females in Nubia immediately before resettlement was extremely low (about 1 to 2). The meager agricultural resources of the area continued to be an important part of subsistence, but it was remittances from urban migrants that made it possible for the women, children, and old men to remain in the villages. At the time of resettlement, an estimated 70,000 Nubians were living outside of Nubia, most of them maintaining some kind of tie with their native communities (Geiser n.d.).

Faced with the necessity of totally abandoning their homeland, the Nubians' attitudes were somewhat ambivalent. They had always stated that their native land was "blessed." They considered the climate, land, and water superior to that found anywhere else in the Nile Valley, and they believed their villages, which were relatively free of outside interference, to have the highest standards of peacefulness, cleanliness, honesty, and personal security in Egypt. On the other hand, they were well aware of the material and social disadvantages that resulted from their isolation, and they resented their inability to participate fully in the revolutionary changes taking place elsewhere in Egypt.<sup>3</sup> While most Nubians appeared to share this general ambivalence to some degree, the attitude toward resettlement varied. As might be expected, the people who enjoyed the most economic security were the least enthusiastic about moving; among these were the few prosperous farmers as well as shopkeepers, boat owners, and government employees.

Age and sex were also important in determining attitudes toward impending resettlement. The younger people tended to be optimistic about New Nubia. Young men looked forward to a more exciting life and a broader range of economic and social opportunities, while women anticipated speedy marriages or more frequent reunions with their husbands. It was widely expected that many of the migrant males in the cities would find work in the resettlement area or at least visit it more frequently; in Old Nubia the cost of transportation and the time and distances involved had discouraged frequent trips.

Before resettlement, a weekly postboat carrying most of the material necessities of life had been the only dependable link with the outside world for most Nubian communities. The scattered pattern of settlement had made school attendance difficult for many children. Clinics were few and usually could be reached only by postboat or by undependable sail-powered felucca. Thus, the Nubians looked forward with enthusiasm to the increase in social services that the government promised would accompany resettlement.

But the Nubians disliked the idea of exchanging their spacious and beautiful homes for concentrated block developments of small, connected

dwellings. They complained that in the government houses, in contrast to their traditional homes, animals and toilets would be compressed within the living space, and the vices of neighbors would be heard through the walls. On the other hand, young people, especially, felt that the new stone and cement houses would have the advantage of permanency over traditional Nubian mud-brick structures, and they anticipated other eventual improvements such as electrification and plumbing.

Another source of anxiety for the Nubians involved their new neighbors, Upper Egyptians (Sa'idis), whom they regarded as aggressive and dishonest. Nubians in their native land were not only numerically superior but ethnically dominant. Nubian urban migrants had left behind many villages composed almost entirely of women and children without fearing that they might be molested. Animals roamed in the custody of women and children and often were sheltered at night in unguarded buildings without fear of theft. In the new area people feared for both their personal security and the safety of their women and property.

Many Nubians took practical steps to prepare themselves for relocation, selling wooden doors and window frames, trees (for charcoal), and the animals which they feared could not be maintained in the new settlement. A few, particularly some of the elderly women, totally refused to accept the idea of resettlement and obstinately maintained their daily round of activities until the day the government boat appeared in front of their village to transport them and their goods to Aswan. In any case, there was no alternative to resettlement and little the Nubians could do to prepare themselves for it.

### **The Relocation Period**

Thanks to careful governmental planning, the actual move was accomplished without serious mishap over a period of seven months.<sup>4</sup> The villagers from each district were moved together in boats to Aswan, and from there by bus to New Nubia. The arrangement of the new settlements roughly parallels the layout of districts in Old Nubia.

Individuals moved with their own communities, in most cases assisted by urban relatives, many of whom had returned to their native villages to help with relocation and to claim their movable property.

Due to shortages of labor and materials, construction of the new settlement was still incomplete when the buses arrived.<sup>5</sup> Although most of the houses were ready for occupation and the schools were finished in most of the districts, the public service buildings were not completed, and some

areas had initial difficulties with water supplies. As might be expected in a relocation project of such magnitude, the first months were extremely difficult in many parts of New Nubia. Already a malnourished population according to Egyptian health authorities, the Nubians were tired and disoriented in their new surroundings. Green vegetables were expensive and scarce, as was fresh milk, a staple in the traditional Nubian diet. Most of the animals that survived the required days of quarantine quickly died from lack of food.<sup>6</sup> Communicable diseases such as dysentery, measles, and a form of encephalitis soon spread in the suddenly condensed population. These conditions, aggravated by the high summer temperatures typical of the region, caused a rapid rise in mortality, especially among the very young and the very old. The problems of the government were further complicated by demands for homes on the part of urban migrants whose families were not in Nubia for the 1961 census on which the right to housing was based; these migrants dramatized their demands by camping in the unfinished streets and in the already crowded new homes of their relatives.<sup>7</sup>

During the first months following relocation, many observers were deeply concerned over the welfare of this population. The concern was not that Nubian families lacked sufficient money for their basic needs. Compensation payments, settling-in allowances, and monthly support payments by the government, plus a dramatic increase in remittances from urban relatives, all helped to cushion the impact of transition from a partial dependence on crops and livestock to a total dependence on cash.<sup>8</sup> The problem was more one of securing and distributing supplies. The Nubians found prices exorbitant and usually felt they were being deliberately cheated by the Sa'idis. It was not just a question of exploitation, however. The sudden introduction of almost 50,000 nonproducing persons into a local economy already inflated by the concentration of labor at the High Dam unquestionably forced the price of fresh food upward and caused acute, if temporary, shortages of all kinds. Many Nubians were frightened by the rapid depletion of their cash and by their frequent inability to secure the normal components of their traditional diet. All of these difficulties contributed to a general feeling of disillusionment. Telegrams and letters of complaint flooded the desks of the responsible authorities, who were struggling to get clinics, markets, and the transportation system into full operation.

Only one year later, observers have noticed a dramatic change in New Nubia. There is a new air of optimism. Many houses have been structurally remodeled and attractively decorated in traditional Nubian styles. Markets are in operation throughout the settlement. Buses move people back and

forth daily between New Nubia, Kom Ombo, and Aswan. Many women are busy with handicrafts introduced by the Ministry of Social Affairs. Most people appear to have accepted their new existence as a normal way of life.

To what can we attribute this rapid change of outlook? In part, of course, many of the early problems were resolved by the completion and organization of public facilities and services. The new schools are in full operation, and many shopkeepers of Old Nubia are ensconced in the modern market areas. Doctors and nurses make medical care much more accessible than in Old Nubia, and in about half the area the government has provided each household with a feddan of land and with water for cultivation. Although these material improvements are of basic importance, the creativeness and initiative of the Nubians themselves have contributed much to the present state of stability and adjustment. The relevant factors may be highlighted by comparing present adaptations in Kom Ombo with related activities in Old Nubia.

### **The Economic Sphere**

Among the most obvious transformations wrought by Nubians in the new resettlement projects is in the appearance and even the structure of the mass-produced dwellings. There is scarcely a neighborhood in New Nubia in which some houses have not been radically altered through the mounting of china plates above the doors, as in Old Nubia, and by plastering the exterior with mud to create a façade upon which traditional Nubian designs may be painted. *Mastabas*, the low clay benches running along the front of all Old Nubian houses, have also been added by many people. Frequently, one man sets a standard soon emulated by owners of other homes along the same street.<sup>9</sup>

Less noticeable but more costly are interior structural alterations designed to separate human from animal quarters, to increase the enclosed area, and to organize the living area for greater efficiency and pleasure. Particularly important to the Nubians is the enlargement of space for entertaining visitors.

Such house remodeling is costly. Some house owners have spent as much as LE300 in their efforts to bring the new homes into conformity with traditional Nubian standards.<sup>10</sup> Many others plan similar improvements as soon as money is available. Sa'idi laborers have been hired for most of the interior structural changes, but Nubian women have plastered the house-fronts and made the *mastabas* as they did in their native villages. Thus the unique artistic and architectural tradition of Old Nubia is reasserting itself and being superimposed upon the drab uniformity of public housing.<sup>11</sup>

Traditional means have also been used to cope with the problems of food supply. Nubian women have supplemented and diversified the family diet by buying chicks, lambs, and kids to replace mature livestock lost in transit. The scarcity of animal food was at first a deterrent to such activities, but some women searched great distances for grass, and some villagers rented land from Sa'idi farmers to grow fodder. Within a few months, most homes had at least one milk goat, and keeping livestock has gradually become more feasible as more Nubian families receive cultivable land from the government.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, many women quickly developed small vegetable gardens in their courtyards, irrigating them with water from the public taps despite official efforts to discourage this use of relatively scarce potable water. These plots resemble the small gardens made in Old Nubia by carrying alluvial soils up onto the sand.

Another example of a traditional response to the food problem was the abandonment of the modern bakeries built in most districts. Nubians said that (1) the cost of the commercial bread was too high; (2) it was not suitable for *fatta*, the traditional food served for ceremonial occasions; and (3) they preferred the taste of the Nubian *durra* bread. The baking of bread, the most important item of Nubian diet, returned to the individual hearth, and the bakeries at least temporarily ceased operation.

Old Nubian patterns can also be seen in transportation. Donkey and handcarts and even used taxis have been purchased by the settlers to supplement the still inadequate public transportation. In Old Nubia, a few feluccas in each community supplemented the weekly postboat service; in most villages in New Nubia, some men (often former boat owners) have joined together to purchase one or more vehicles for local use. The district of Ambarakab in Old Nubia supplied a large number of feluccas for the transport of goods throughout the Nubian valley; in New Nubia, Ambarakab's many old taxis perform the same services for a considerable section of the resettlement area.<sup>13</sup>

Many other more individual efforts at solving economic problems have also emerged. For example, some of the men who came from cities in the hope of receiving houses and finding jobs have now returned to their urban occupations, while others have managed to find work in the expanding labor market of Aswan province.<sup>14</sup> A number of people have opened small shops in their homes, and a few have established restaurants or coffee-houses. Some women rent sleeping rooms to day students attending the new secondary schools.

The increase of ready cash through compensation payments has not been without negative consequences. While some people invested their

extra money in gold jewelry, postal savings, land, or house improvements, others, particularly young men without jobs, have begun to gamble and to drink far more than was typical in Old Nubia. Because of the return of migrants, the number of men in residence is higher than it was in Old Nubia. A number of young men, dissatisfied with city life or hoping for work in the Aswan area, have not returned to the urban centers. With little to do and little commitment to the new communities, they now pose difficult new problems of social control for the more responsible majority of Nubians.

The sudden vacuum created in the lives of the women has been of even more widespread importance. The daily round of work completely absorbed their energies in Old Nubia. But in the new communities, with no need to carry water long distances from the river, less work to do in the fields and for their animals, and houses a fraction of the size of their old ones to care for, Nubian women suddenly have many hours of unaccustomed leisure. Most of the traditional handicrafts cannot be pursued due to a lack of raw materials, and the government handicraft program has not reached all the women.<sup>15</sup>

The incomparably greater ease with which both men and women can now visit friends and relatives, previously separated from them by miles of desert and water, has resulted in expansion of the range of day-to-day social interaction and has undoubtedly helped to unify the newly established communities. The potential for integration of this new closeness is, however, counteracted somewhat by the government policy of house assignment, which has resulted in a complete change in neighborhood composition.

In Old Nubia, neighborhoods were formed largely by natural groupings of close kin. In New Nubia the assignment of houses ignored the existing social and kin groups and was based only on the size of the household unit recorded in the 1961 census. Four sizes of new houses were built, and for ease of construction, houses of the same size were grouped together.<sup>16</sup> The grouping of families by size not only broke up the old neighborhoods and villages within each district, but also segregated most of the older members of the community. Widows or elderly couples whose children had their own homes were assigned to the small-house section of the new community. Thus it is often difficult for their younger relatives, who live in the section of larger homes, to render the assistance customarily due elders. This is still a cause of complaint although, despite government regulations forbidding sale and transfer of houses, readjustments to bring kinsmen back together have been made in some areas.

## Ceremonial Patterns

Not only have old villages and neighborhoods been disrupted, but the basic demographic pattern has suddenly and radically shifted. In contrast to scattered villages, usually containing less than a hundred residents and often separated from other communities by sand dunes and rocky hills, we now find settlements containing hundreds of persons who may see one another daily and are within easy walking distance of neighboring settlements. This transformation has challenged the continuance of ceremonial life in its traditional form.<sup>17</sup>

The major ceremonial occasions are weddings, funerals, Islamic feasts, and, particularly in the Kenuz area, *mulids* (saint's day celebrations). In Old Nubia, kinship and residence tended to define the range of participation in these activities. Ceremonial activity was largely a product of reciprocal obligations between individuals or families and was not formally organized by means of corporate community-wide organization, though among the Kneuz the presence of functioning tribal units was an important factor.<sup>18</sup>

Distance was important in determining the extent of participation in such ceremonies. Roughly speaking, even close kinsmen more than a day's traveling distance from each other were not absolutely required to enter into mutual obligations, while even unrelated neighbors were usually under strong obligation to participate in each other's ceremonies. Depending on the particular history of relations between individuals, reciprocal ceremonial responsibilities might involve mere physical presence at an occasion or payments of money, goods, or services in varying amounts. A basic feature of the ceremonial pattern was its open-endedness; no formal restriction prevented newcomers, unrelated neighbors, or others from participating. However, such voluntary participation meant the assumption of a new set of obligations, and in the relatively stable social world of Old Nubia, this was comparatively rare.

But in New Nubia, with distance no longer a barrier, the cultural norm of community-wide attendance has vastly increased the size of ceremonial occasions. Social boundaries within the settlement are also still in the process of being defined, but due to the ease of transportation and increased leisure time, participation even by persons living miles from the event is no longer unusual. The attempt to fulfill the traditional hospitality requirements associated with these activities placed an almost impossible financial burden on the hosts, and in addition created logistic problems. It is one thing to serve tea to twenty or thirty persons but quite another to serve refreshments to hundreds.

The scattering of kinsmen in the new settlements also created another problem. In Old Nubia, neighbors usually were kinsmen and as such were co-hosts at weddings and mourning ceremonies. In the Kenuz area, villages were composed largely of the members of one tribe or tribal section, which acted as host for the *mulid*. The new residential situation clearly required a new definition of the host group. Should they be neighbors or kinsmen?

The continuation of traditional Nubian ceremonial life depended, then, on the solution of two fundamental problems: how to reduce the financial and logistic burden to manageable proportions, and how to determine who should be the hosts. The first of these problems could have been solved by limiting participation. This, however, runs contrary to Nubian norms of hospitality and reciprocity. Not only were there no traditional means for restricting attendance, but the idea of restriction is repugnant to Nubians. Undoubtedly owing partly to their previous geographical isolation and fragmentation of their families by migration, they place high value on reunions and social gatherings of all kinds.

Rather than restrict participation, the Nubians have simplified the ceremonies. For instance, weddings have always involved the slaughter of several animals and the serving of at least one full meal to every guest, plus additional meals to those who had travelled too far to return home the same day. At a recent series of weddings in Diwan, guests were served only a sweet drink and candy; no one was obliged to remain overnight, and hundreds rather than scores of persons could thus enjoy the festivities.

*Azas*, or mourning ceremonies, always lasted for at least seven days in Old Nubia and involved raising a special shelter for shade and serving tea or coffee to those who came to condole. Attendance at *azas* is even more strictly observed than attendance at weddings. Neglecting to condole a bereaved family whose members have previously come to one's own *aza* is considered very shameful and will seriously disrupt relations between the families involved. Thus in Old Nubia individuals would sometimes travel considerable distances to participate in such ceremonies. If they were nearby they might come three or four times. In New Nubia the trend is clearly for *azas* to be held for just one day. Guests are served only a cup of tea, and distance no longer makes it necessary for anyone to remain overnight.<sup>19</sup>

In the choosing of hosts for these occasions, residence is beginning to take precedence over kinship. Particularly in the case of the *aza*, it has already been decided in many districts that neighbors along the same street should assist the household of the deceased by bringing and serving tea to the visitors. In several areas, a formal decision to change the custom followed

discussion of the problem at the Friday mosque service. This is not to say that relatives now never help each other on such occasions, but new patterns of residence have made it easier to stress the mutual responsibilities of neighborliness (a value that was important in Old Nubia also) than the old obligations of kin.

Other important Nubian ceremonies posed the same kinds of problems. The Islamic feasts in Old Nubia were annual occasions on which the solidarity of tribal and village groups was symbolized by processions. All the men and boys would file by each of the village houses, where the women, dressed in their finest clothes, waited to greet them with small glasses of tea and tidbits from a bowl of special food.

In the new settlement, several different ways of adapting this custom to the problem of numbers are being tried out. In this year's feast in Diwan, small groups of kinsmen visited the houses of their own relatives, who are now scattered throughout the area. In one of the Kenuz settlements, the men visited every house, not only in their own district but also in two adjacent districts.

Though the women of each house vociferously invited all of the guests inside for tea and cookies, only a few of the closest relatives accepted; the rest simply shook hands, wished them a happy feast, and passed on. In both cases, the form of Nubian customs was preserved in the accommodation to the new circumstances.

The tendency for residence to override kinship affiliation is also dramatically illustrated by changes in the ceremonial system in some districts of the tribally organized Kenuz. The ceremonial complex among the Kenuz included annual *mulids* (anniversary feasts) of a large number of local saints at shrines along the Nile. These occasions were often also important for symbolizing tribal solidarity and rank.

The concentration of Kenuz villages and the increase in population due to the return of urban members provided an opportunity to strengthen tribal unity, an opportunity recognized when the largest tribe in the district of Dahmit held one of the first *mulids*. However, the tribes had agreed that such celebrations would be organized on a community-wide rather than a tribal basis, and so strong was the desire to simplify and integrate that the tribe which violated this agreement by holding its own *mulid* was formally rebuked at an intertribal council. It was decided that only one *mulid* should be held each year in this district.<sup>20</sup> The reduction in number of *mulids* (for example, from eight to one per year in Dahmit) may not decrease individuals' *mulid* attendance, since people from different districts will now be able to attend each other's celebrations.

The traditional religious system provides convenient supernatural sanction for this reduction in the number of *mulids*. The establishment of a saint cult with its shrine depends upon visitations to an individual by the saint in dreams and subsequent signs indicating where the shrine should be built.

The same supernatural signs determine if shrines should be moved to new locations, and since resettlement, there have been very few of these spiritual visitations. So far, the needed simplification of the ceremonial calendar has thus been justified without violating religious beliefs.

In addition to these attempts to maintain customs by adapting them to the new demographic pattern, the resettlement was the occasion for other changes. Perhaps because of their urban experiences, many Nubians had long felt it desirable to bring some of their customs and ceremonies into greater conformity with practices elsewhere in Egypt. Before relocation, many stated that they felt they were going to a new modern life, more like that of the cities they had visited or lived in than that of their native villages. At many marriage ceremonies after resettlement, a number of elements typical in Egyptian cities were introduced, and a number of Nubian customs were dropped or simplified. For example, in at least two districts the bride is no longer isolated from men with her head covered but, wearing modern wedding dress, is put on public view on a raised decorated platform beside the groom. The cost of weddings has risen sharply because of the introduction of the Egyptian *shabka* (groom's engagement gifts to the bride). Also, many urban items, such as fancy bedroom furniture, are now often thought necessary for the newly married couple, so the previously fixed marriage payment (*mahr*) has also risen and become economically more important in some districts.

There have been numerous other minor changes in customs, all of which seem to have occurred without much conflict and which seem consonant with the practical and objective cultural outlook that most observers have found characteristic of Nubians.<sup>21</sup>

## The Future

The destiny of the small Nubian enclave in Egypt obviously hinges on a great many unforeseeable circumstances. However, most of the adjustments to the new conditions of life that have emerged after only one year of resettlement are meaningfully related to well-established Nubian cultural and social patterns. There seems no good reason to assume that such culturally shaped responses will not continue. We may infer some of the broad directions of change from processes already under way.

An important question concerns long-term economic development of the resettled Nubian communities. Thus far, governmental planning calls for the Nubian settlers to become cash-crop farmers, producing sugarcane for the local factories on 40 percent of their land. It is expected that the cane from the approximately thirty-five feddans that may eventually be reclaimed for the Nubians will more than double the production of sugar in the Kom Ombo area and will require additional investment in processing plants and equipment. But the cultivation of sugarcane cannot be undertaken by a population composed predominantly of women, children, and old men. Surely, if these plans are to be realized, a significant proportion of men now in urban centers will have to rejoin their families and take up agriculture. For several reasons it seems doubtful that things will work out as the planners anticipate.

In the first place, many observers have wondered if it will be possible to reverse the rural-urban pattern of migration, which has been not only the foundation of the Nubian economy in this century, but also an integrated cultural adjustment to long-prevailing conditions which has given the Nubians certain urban values and habits (see Fernea 1966). The Nubians demonstrate an almost universal aversion to unskilled blue-collar jobs involving heavy labor; even the relatively high wages paid for such work on the Aswan Dam seem not to have tempted them to leave the low-level white-collar positions that the younger men prefer, or the service occupations that have traditionally been their urban specialty.<sup>22</sup> Finally, where pumps were installed following the raising of the first Aswan Dam, many men who acquired land had Sa'idi farmers work it as sharecroppers while they themselves continued to work in the cities. Already many of the one-feddan plots distributed in the new settlement are being sharecropped by neighboring Sa'idis despite official displeasure at this small-scale absentee landlordism. The Nubians will probably find ways to benefit from their new resources, but perhaps not by becoming enthusiastic cash-crop farmers.

Of even broader interest is the whole question of the survival of the Nubians as an ethnic entity in the context of Egyptian modernization and nationalism. Unquestionably, one of the major objectives of the administration in planning resettlement has been to integrate the Nubians more fully into national life. Yet, paradoxically, some of the resettlement policies seem to contribute to the persistence of a Nubian entity, at least in the immediate future.

On the one hand, a number of factors in the new situation would appear to encourage assimilation. The Nubians have lost the isolated villages that

protected the women and children from many acculturative influences and symbolized and preserved all that was traditionally Nubian for the urban migrants. Now the young people will participate in a much more efficient educational system, which will not only promote the learning of Arabic at the expense of the traditional Nubian languages, but also promulgate more effectively the Egyptian popular culture and nationalist ideology.

Furthermore, the Nubians share a considerable body of socio-religious tradition with their new neighbors in Aswan province and, indeed, with most rural Egyptians. Undoubtedly these common elements as well as increased familiarity have acted to replace the Nubians' anxiety over living near the allegedly rapacious Sa'idis with a more realistic appraisal of their new neighbors. Already the fundamental contribution of the Sa'idis as the major suppliers of food and labor for the new settlements has encouraged the formal exchange of visits between some communities of the two ethnic groups on the Islamic feast days and other occasions. Old stereotypes are now even becoming the subject of humorous exchanges between Sa'idis and Nubians, although it seems doubtful that all suspicion and conflict will disappear in the immediate future.

On the other hand, the fact that the government acceded to the demand of the Nubians for unified resettlement rather than dispersing them throughout the country will undoubtedly work against rapid assimilation and permit them to respond to new influences more selectively than would have been possible otherwise. Furthermore, the publicity concerning resettlement focused the attention of the nation and the world as never before on the Nubians as a single people, awakening them to a new appreciation of their common interests and cultural heritage. The stage has thus been set for the emergence of a more inclusive group identity than in the past, when regional, local, tribal, and linguistic diversity were of far greater social importance than the customs shared by all Nubian groups.

This greater self-awareness and incipient integration have already expressed themselves in a number of ways. The role of the elected Nubian delegates to the National Assembly of the UAR has clearly become one of representing *all* Nubians rather than merely their own districts or tribes as in comparable cases in the past. The fact that two Nubians from the province of Aswan were elected to the Assembly is itself significant, since they competed with non-Nubian candidates on a regional basis. The Nubians are becoming aware that in regional and national politics their demands carry more weight when they appear to represent the will of the

entire group. In the economic realm, Nubians already monopolize many civil service positions in the Aswan governorate, and they readily admit that they intend to perpetuate and extend these advantages by their traditional method of job recruitment on the bases of kinship and ethnic origin.

If the Nubians are to persist in more than name, they must perpetuate the basic values and norms underlying that part of Nubian culture that is unique. These basic values and traditions are products of village life, however much they may have been modified by the urban experiences of migrants. Clearly, New Nubia is no longer a collection of villages but is more closely akin to a large, homogeneous suburbia. Can village values be sustained under such conditions? It seems unlikely. Yet we have seen that tentative steps are already being taken to realign ceremonial and other activities on the basis of the new residential arrangements rather than the old village and kinship units. Traditional rural values can perhaps be sustained only if these emerging neighborhoods become the functional equivalents of the old villages. However, the many analogies between this situation and general urbanization processes lead us to suppose that the old values and customs must give way and that some kind of compromise solution will emerge.

What do the Nubians themselves want? Clearly, both urban material advantages and rural virtues. Nor do most of them recognize that these objectives may be contradictory, since they have often succeeded in enjoying much of the best of both urban and rural world. However, already they are finding new difficulties in achieving this in the new setting. Older Nubians in particular complain of the "un-Nubian" impersonality of relations within the new neighborhoods. For example, sometimes on the same street where a funeral is taking place a wedding continues or even begins, an impossibility under the strong norms of respect in the old villages. Some complain that hospitality offered to such great numbers of people has become superficial and mechanical. Returning relatives from the city bring few gifts and are no longer greeted by happy crowds from the village or tribe. Regrets have been expressed that neighbors on a street do not share each others' joys and sorrows as villagers did before. As one sophisticated Nubian leader stated the dilemma, "We want to modernize our houses but not our values." It now seems more difficult than ever before to accomplish this, but perhaps the practicality with which Nubians have solved their problems in the past will enable them to reconcile the many conflicts inherent in their new life.

## Notes

- 1 The authors wish to acknowledge with thanks the help of the following research assistants who participated in gathering information in new Nubia: Mohamed Fikri Abdul Wahab, Omar Abdel Hamid, Fadwa el Guindi, Samiha El Katsha, Nawal el-Messiri, Abdul Hamid el Zein, Hussein Fahim, Bahiga Haikal, Sohair Mehanna.
- 2 This practice, however, was important on a smaller scale for at least a century prior to the construction of the first dam.
- 3 Some social services had been penetrating into Nubia, but more slowly and on a smaller scale than in other parts of Egypt.
- 4 Between October 1963 and May 1964. Compensation payments for property losses had been completed several months before resettlement.
- 5 Nubians had to be moved before completion of the first stage of the High Dam. This involved the closing of a coffer dam which was to raise the water level in Nubia following the 1964 flood.
- 6 Nubians say that it costs more to support a donkey in New Nubia than to support a family in Old Nubia.
- 7 These migrants have been promised homes in the 'second stage' of construction.
- 8 The approximate range of compensation payments was LE40 to LE1,500 or more. Settling-in allowances of LE4 were given at the time of relocation, and monthly support payments average about LE2 to LE5 per family.
- 9 The Kenuz settlement of Kashtumna East is so far most outstanding in the amount of these changes; in most neighborhoods, whole blocks have been renovated so that the standardized understructure is invisible.
- 10 In 1960 Egyptian per capita income was LE52.4 per year.
- 11 However, it seems unlikely that the level of originality and variety of architecture of Old Nubia will ever be attained again, due to the limitations imposed by the cement houses and the lack of interest in such matters by most of the 'modernizing' young people.
- 12 In a number of districts where Nubians are now able to farm, the small plots of land have become, as in Old Nubia, the basis of small-scale livestock production.
- 13 This effort has not been an unmitigated success, as a number of the cars have broken down and seem as yet beyond the means of the Nubians to repair.
- 14 While most of the men holding salaried jobs (such as telegraph and postal clerks, teachers, and guards) in Old Nubia took up the same posts in the resettled area, the expanded service facilities provided a number of new positions. Some men also found employment at the High Dam, Qima Chemical Co., and so on, though the number of these is restricted by the traditional Nubian aversion to manual labor.

- 15 In some areas the program has been hindered by men's refusal to allow their women to go to the craft centers.
- 16 The sizes of the houses were from one to four bedrooms. The area of the courtyard, kitchen, animal pen, and guest area increases with the number of rooms.
- 17 While within Old Nubia there were variations from district to district and among the major linguistic regions, the basic problems of ceremonial adjustment were similar and we shall, where possible, confine our discussion to these general similarities.
- 18 See Callender (n.d.) and Fernea (n.d.) for organizational differences between the major sub-areas of Nubia.
- 19 Paradoxically, the great increase in attendance has been accompanied by a radical decrease in the actual economic responsibility of the hosts.
- 20 This council meeting was a *baq al-Arab*—the traditional means of resolving intergroup disputes. In this case important men or a neighboring community, Ambarakab, were called in to arbitrate, a fact indicating the widening pattern of interaction. The tribe in error was fined an amount of money that the other tribes then publicly returned to them!
- 21 As examples, we may list here the many customs associated with the Nile, which is now too distant for most Nubians to visit constantly, the changes in female costume occurring in many districts, and changes from Nubian to Egyptian types of food at the feasts.
- 22 Most of the service positions at the High Dam, such as waiters in restaurants, guesthouses, and so on, are filled by Nubians, as are quite a few clerical jobs.

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# Community Health Aspects of Nubian Resettlement in Egypt

Hussein M. Fahim\*

## Introduction

Moving from one homeland to a new one can be a painful experience for the people involved. Mass population movement and human resettlement projects too can represent a challenging task and a costly development technique for the governments involved. Community relocation schemes should not be viewed as unusual situations of limited scope. They have increasingly become a worldwide phenomenon in recent years and may be expected to increase in the future along with the tendency to design new environments by radically altering old ones. Governments often view relocation schemes as an opportunity to raise the living standards of the relocatees and to incorporate them into the productive mainstream of the nation. Government relocation policies, however, are often inclined to have a limited perspective and a short time span. A case in point is the community health aspects of the Nubian resettlement in Egypt and the related problems that occur in similar human relocation situations. This paper discusses various dimensions of the health problems of the relocated Nubian community and is concerned with the connection of these problems to the process of building new human communities.<sup>1</sup>

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## The Setting

By June 1964, some 50,000 Nubians had been relocated from their homeland along the Nile in the southern part of Egypt to a new site (known as New Nubia) in the Kom Ombo region, about forty kilometers north of the city of Aswan. Resettlement of the Nubians was a consequence of the Aswan High Dam construction and the inundation of the Nubian Valley by the formation of the second largest man-made lake in the world. The dam is perceived as having brought economic benefits to the whole country and, in appreciation of Nubian compliance with the national interest, the government committed itself to compensating them for the loss of their property and to establish them in a new, improved community. Although the Nubian resettlement scheme was carried out without serious mishaps, it is important to point out the complexities and consequences associated with the planning stage, the implementation of the resettlement operation, and the Nubians' adaptation to a new environment (for additional information on Nubian relocation see Fahim 1979).

Relocated communities usually undergo a transitional period that often begins when the relocatees prepare for evacuation and extends until they regain their former self-sufficiency and develop a satisfactory relationship with their new environment. In examining peoples' responses to compulsory relocations, Thayer Scudder (1973), who had dealt intensively with dam resettlement in tropical Africa, has proposed that a multidimensional stress is often associated with human relocation. This physiological, psychological, and social stress characterizes an inevitable transitional period whose intensity and length vary from one situation to another. A related problem would be to identify the termination of such stress and the end of the transitional period. I view community health as an especially useful index for assessing the dynamics of adaptation and rehabilitation among such relocatees.

A community-health index not only measures the availability and use of new medical services, it also addresses the broader dimensions of health as a state of being sound in body and mind. Relocatees may be in a better physical condition due to improved medical care and food aid; yet, unless their state of mind is also normal, they will always feel "strangers in a foreign land" or "temporary settlers"—to use two informants' phrases—and consequently continue to be dissident and dependent. This paper addresses the community health aspects of relocation as manifest in three domains of Nubian life: (a) the food crisis; (b) the health and social implications of the new settlement pattern; and (c) the relationship of government health services and 'resettlement illness' to adaptation and rehabilitation processes.

## **The Relocation Food Crisis**

There was a delay in making the necessary arrangements to accommodate Nubians in their new locality. They had to be relocated at certain dates so that the engineering aspects of the dam construction could meet the schedule. As a result, the Nubians were moved to an area not yet capable of meeting their food demands, since only 10 percent of the allocated area in the Kom Ombo region was ready for cultivation. The arrival of 50,000 people in a nonproductive land immediately caused a food shortage and a substantial rise in the price of commodities. The Nubian newcomers to Kom Ombo relocation area had to go for quite a distance to find food, especially fresh vegetables and fruits.

In order to counter the relocation food crisis, the government made bread and groceries available in the local markets. However, this measure proved inadequate in meeting Nubians' demands. Seventeen newly established modern bakeries were put into full operation to provide the settlers with bread, the basic food item in all Nubian meals. Nubians gradually abandoned the market bread, however, and replaced it with their home-baked bread that suited their budget and taste. These bakeries established in New Nubia were very expensive and are all closed now except for four, which provide bread for schools serving meals to students. Groceries and canned beef and fish were also available in four state-managed consumer cooperatives, but settlers were dissatisfied with the price and taste of canned food to which they were not accustomed. They thought that canned food was unhealthy and caused stomach troubles. In their view, it is not courteous to serve canned food to guests. One measure taken by Nubians to meet the shortage of green vegetables was to develop small gardens similar to those they had had in Old Nubia. These gardens were formed by putting alluvial soil onto the sand in courtyards or in front of the house if there was a suitable place, and irrigating them with water from the public taps, despite official efforts to discourage this use of relatively limited potable drinking water.

In assessing the relocation food crisis and its implications for individuals and community health, it is important to point out that Nubians did not by any means reach a state of starvation; yet, the food situation was very unfavorable on both health and social grounds. For several months before relocation Nubians, as part of their preparation for the move, ceased to cultivate their lands and consumed their animal and grain stock. In some instances, when the departure schedules were postponed, the food situation was reported to be extremely bad. As a result, the Nubians were actually in a state of undernourishment long before they settled in the new land. The insufficient and

inadequate food in the new locality resulted in malnutrition among people who were already undernourished. Doctors found that the food crisis affected the health conditions among the relocatees at a time when the Nubians needed to be physically capable of coping with relocation stress. Doctors also reported that protein deficiency was evident in the Nubian diet. Resistance to infectious diseases was described as very low, especially among infants and elderly people. Official vital statistics show a high rise in the crude death rate among the relocatees during the two years following relocation; from 13.6 in 1963 (the year preceding the beginning of relocation) to 23.6 in 1965 (the year following the completion of relocation). This substantial increase in mortality, in spite of the improved medical facilities, is a possible consequence of the food crisis and its complications. The insufficiency and inadequacy of food over a long period created a state of anxiety among the relocatees due to the uncertainty of life prospects in the relocation area and aggravated "the grieving for a lost home" (Fried 1963).

To cope with the food crisis in the relocation area, the government requested food commodities from the United Nations' Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) as a relief measure for the economic hardship among the people in the relocation area. The distribution of FAO commodities began almost one year after relocation and lasted for eighteen months, from January 1965 to June 1966. In 1970, the World Food Program (WFP) provided food commodities only to Nubian landholders as an incentive measure for land development. The other Nubians viewed that as a discriminatory measure. They believed that the government ought to support them until they all became economically secure as they had been promised. But when would Nubians consider themselves economically independent? This is an unanswered question for Nubians who still complain of the meager returns from the new land, which was given to them as late as 1970. It appears that many Nubians wish to continue in the status of a deprived and unrewarded people so that they may benefit from a longer dependency period.

The uses of food-aid commodities clearly indicate that Nubians liked receiving aid and wish to have it continue. FAO food aid was composed of wheat flour, cooking oil, and dried skim milk. Nubians reacted favorably to this aid and made good use of it except for the oil, which they regarded as rancid because of long storage. Informants reported that flour distribution encouraged them to give up market bread and return to their old custom of breadmaking. The WFP commodities were composed of cheese and sugar. However, Nubians disliked the taste of cheese and preferred instead to sell

it cheaply in the town market. The same was true for oil. In sum, a common feeling among the Nubians was that "food aid helped us to survive." In the absence of baseline data, doctors cannot reliably assess the impact of food aid on the relocatees' health. Nevertheless, they believe that food commodities did improve the quality of the Nubian diet to some extent. It has also been difficult to compare those who receive food aid and those who do not since the latter group has access to food commodities through purchase.

The relocation food crisis is not unique to the Nubian case. Other African dam relocation schemes (such as Volta in Ghana and Kariba in Zambia) had to seek food relief for their relocated populations from local or international resources. On the basis of the Nubian experience, it seems that relocatees should begin receiving food relief *before* the actual evacuation in order to minimize subsequent cultural disruptions (cf. Butcher 1970). The problem does not lie here, however.

While the transitional period should be as short as possible, the history of African relocation projects shows that in some areas it has lasted as long as some seven years, as in Ghana in connection with the Volta dam relocation scheme. The most serious consequence resulting from a long transitional period is the development of a dependency syndrome among the relocatees. If international food aid is extended either as a relief measure or as an incentive policy during the transitional period, it can be dysfunctional to rehabilitation. This dysfunctional effect lies not only in increasing and intensifying dependency among the relocatees (thus hindering or at least prolonging their adjustment process), but also in the possible creation of local governmental dependence on the donor international organization. The possibility of obtaining or extending international food aid could encourage delays in getting the relocation areas sufficiently productive during the immediate years following resettlement. Thus, it would be desirable to begin food aid early and to wean the people off such aid as soon as practicable after relocation.

### **The Settlement Pattern**

The Nubian relocation area lies in a recently reclaimed and irrigated land on the eastern side of the Kom Ombo valley in the northern section of the Aswan governorate. For ease of construction and in order to facilitate access to the physical infrastructure and public utilities, New Nubia was designed as a relatively compact area combining six hundred hamlets (previously dispersed along the Nile's banks over a distance of 350 kilometers) into forty-three villages occupying some two hundred square kilometers, including

the new lands reclaimed for cultivation. Consequently, villages were situated contiguously in contrast to the old settlement pattern. In compliance with the policy of economizing the cost of village construction, the new houses were built symmetrically in blocks according to house size, varying from one to four rooms in addition to a courtyard, kitchen, and bathroom.

An immediate consequence of the new settlement pattern was the sudden and intense contact of a substantial number of people in a relatively confined area. Moving from the old setting to the new land was described by one informant as like “moving from a suburb to downtown.” A school headmaster viewed the repercussions of that shift as a great transformation: “The new landscape is different—there are no trees, no rivers. The pace of life is different too. In Old Nubia life was truly natural, simple, easygoing and particularly informal. These things have been changed a lot. One feels here that he lives in a whirlpool.” This ‘whirlpool’ feeling was widespread and contributed much to the tension and stress predominant among the relocatees.

A majority of the relocatees expressed displeasure with the new houses and the residence pattern in the relocation area. One major complaint was their transfer from spacious and separate dwelling into compact and contiguous one-story homes with relatively low dividing walls. This created a common feeling of insecurity and lack of personal privacy. Nubians were also frustrated at suddenly finding themselves in contact with groups other than their relatives and neighbors. Many lived in great fear of the neighboring non-Nubian settlements. In the year or two following relocation, many Nubians used to fire shots at night to warn off whoever might have bad intentions. While political and economic contacts between Nubians and their neighbors have increased since resettlement, Nubians are still cautious and socially introverted. Another reason for Nubians’ discontent is that the distribution of the houses on the basis of family size resulted in the fragmentation and dispersion of social and economic units already established in the family-based neighborhoods.

The housing situation, then, seemed to contribute to Nubians’ unwillingness to accept the realities of the resettlement experience and to cope with its challenges. Instead, they became extremely restless for quite a time during which they protested, vociferously though peacefully, to government officials and institutions about the failure of housing arrangements to accommodate their traditional life. Many relocatees viewed the new houses as a cultural threat and believed that something must be done to adjust the new living quarters to the old patterns. The linkage between traditions and Nubian homes was expressed clearly by a local leader: “If we want to maintain our old

customs, we must maintain our Nubian architecture.” Nubians, accordingly, did not wait for the outcome of their complaints nor did they comply with the engineering notion of maintaining the conformity of a common architectural design of the new houses as a feature of modernity. Shortly after relocation, they began remodeling their houses by reasserting, whenever possible, basic elements of their past architecture. The women should be given credit for taking the initiative and participating in a widespread practice in most of the villages “to change the government house to Nubian homes.”

Relocation to a compact new land increased the population density. The small, widely separated hamlets (each of which had had less than a hundred residents) were replaced by densely populated and contiguous settlements of which nearly 25 percent had populations of over 2,000. Room crowding also became a common phenomenon; statistics show a remarkable increase in the crowding rate after relocation, from 0.7 persons per room prior to resettlement to a rate of 1.7 two years after relocation. During the first years following relocation, village population density and overcrowding in the houses helped to spread communicable diseases such as dysentery, measles, and a form of encephalitis. The general health conditions of animals, especially cattle, deteriorated as a result of the dense crowding and the change from their accustomed habitat. Crowding is even worse in 1975 than in 1966, due to the growth of relocated families since resettlement, a fact not considered when houses were first distributed. The Nubian population is also increasing because of the return of many urban Nubians to join their immediate families or close relatives who must accommodate them in already reduced living quarters.

In coping with the problems of overcrowded houses, Nubians tried two major solutions. One solution, carried out only by the few who could afford it, was to add a second story to their houses. This was not only costly but also risky due to the lack of solid foundations and strong walls. Perhaps more importantly for neighborhood privacy and security considerations, Nubians themselves discouraged this approach. Instead of vertical extension, they extended their houses horizontally wherever space permitted. They also built barns for animals either in the middle of the streets or in nearby spaces. Unlike Egyptian peasants, Nubians do not like to have their field animals kept inside the house. During my 1975 visit to the area, I found some villages where streets were occupied by animal barns; as a result, animal waste and flies had become a health nuisance. Cleanliness, a distinctive quality of Old Nubian villages, is disappearing in many villages where space

can no longer accommodate the human and animal population growth. The Nubian population increased some 25 percent between 1963 and 1966; the official estimate of the 1974 population size was 85,000 in comparison to nearly 47,000 in 1963. The number of livestock and poultry has also increased, especially for Nubian families engaged in agricultural work.

Due to the lack of coordination between housing and agricultural planning schemes, some villages were built at unsuitable sites that subjected them to a serious water-drainage problem. Although the relocation area is relatively flat, it slopes slightly from east to west toward the Nile. Swamps have been and still are forming in several places and have become a good habitat for mosquitoes. This problem is found in nearly 20 percent of the new villages, one of which has become so unfit for human habitation that it had to be relocated to a new site. One serious repercussion of the poor water drainage is the problem of fast-filling of house latrines and the necessity for constant latrine sewage removal. Nubians complain of the cost and effort of cleaning house latrines. Delays in cleaning latrines often cause problems among neighbors due to the bad smell and seeping water and solid waste. Wash water is also thrown outside the houses in the streets, causing many disputes among neighbors. The water drainage and latrine sewage difficulties have increasingly become not only a nuisance for many people but also a serious health problem.

The preceding description attempts to show the complexity of community-relocation schemes and the many variables and unforeseen consequences involved. It illustrates the kind of health and social problems that occur in a new settlement and residence scheme designed for a relocated population. In planning new villages and houses, planners must bear in mind the dynamics of population growth and their serious long-term implications for individuals and for community-health conditions. The physical and psychological stresses that result in part from the housing arrangements impede a smooth and rapid adaptation to the new environment. Such stresses have negative implications for the government's rehabilitation policy. The current housing situation, with its health implications, should not be overlooked as an important factor in the continuing unwillingness of many Nubians to accept New Nubia as their homeland.

### **Government Health Service and 'Resettlement Illness'**

Health services were planned and implemented to raise the health standards of the Nubian relocatees from what had been the traditional situation. The dispersion of small villages along the Nile in the old Nubian setting made it

extremely difficult for many Nubians to have access to government medical care. Only a twenty-bed hospital was located in the central town of 'Aniba, in addition to limited hospitalization service offered by a German missionary in the northern part of Old Nubia. In southern Nubia, health services, especially in connection with epidemic disease control, were provided to inhabitants by means of river steamer. In effect, government health services were very limited and of marginal use to Nubians, who depended mainly on their folk ways in the diagnosis and treatment of diseases. Their folk medicine was tied to their belief system, local environment (especially in relation to medical ingredients), and ceremonial practices.

The response of Nubians to government medical services has been exceptionally favorable. The relocatees believe that provision of medical services is a positive consequence of resettlement. Health officials indicate that the positive response of the relocatees to improved medical services has probably contributed to the lowering of the crude death rate, especially among the infants. Available statistics indicate a tendency toward a lower death rate after a rather unusual rise during the two years immediately following relocation. (Note the stress of the relocation experience in this peak in the death rate.) The crude death rate became seventeen in 1974 in contrast to an average of twenty-three for the years of 1964–65. Yet, it is still higher than a national rate of fourteen-and-a-half for 1974 and is also higher than a yearly average death rate of fourteen between 1956 and 1959, prior to resettlement.

Records show that a substantial number of Nubians visit outpatient clinics. There is also a waiting list for people applying for hospitalization. However, the scene of men, women, and children crowded into clinics should not, according to local doctors, imply the existence of an ill community. Rather, they reflect a common desire among the relocatees to benefit as much as possible from the free medical services, whether or not they actually need them. On market days, for instance, a visit to the health clinic has become a routine practice among market clients, especially among those women who regularly shop at the weekly market. The doctors also point out that many clients do not mind waiting for hours just to complain of very minor things such as a "simple headache" or a "finger-scratch," or to ask for vitamins for themselves and relatives. The feeling among the relocatees is, doctors assume, "Why not make use of a free service?" When asked why they go to the clinic for such minor matters, informants do express such an attitude.

Despite the improved medical services and the good use Nubians have made of them, their folk medicine continues to exist, although with some

accommodations. For cases of cold and dysentery, for example, folk medicine is applied in addition to doctors' prescriptions. If the ingredients for folk medicine are not available in the new habitat, doctors' prescriptions are followed. The general tendency, however, is to substitute "clinic medicine"—to use informants' terminology—for their traditional medicine only in case of organic diseases. But mental illness continues to have its folk practitioners and treatments. "This is not the kind of illness that one takes to the clinic doctor. We have our specialized doctors"—to quote an informant. Diseases, in the Nubians' view, fall into two major categories: one related to the body, that is, organic; the other connected to the mind, that is, mental. Organic disease can be cured by either folk or clinical medicine, but mental illness requires a complex set of ceremonial diagnoses and treatments, which come under the realm of traditional Nubian folk medicine rather than clinical medicine.

A striking example of using medical facilities while continuing traditional practices is the case of childbirth. Pregnant women often register their names in the clinic's maternal care section, mainly to take advantage of the free medical care and food aid for themselves and their babies before and after delivery. While it is expected that specialized nurses, who are available in the clinic at all times, will be called upon for delivery, childbirth often occurs with the help of village midwives, with the nurse called in immediately after the baby is born. She does the necessary post-partum medical care; consequently, the mother continues to receive maternal services. Meanwhile, the midwife is given the opportunity to perform her traditional function. By such an arrangement, an adaptive mechanism has been worked out to take advantage of the new without disturbing or abandoning the old. For instance, one nurse said that she assisted in the actual delivery in just two out of twenty maternal cases during January 1975. Health officials believe that it is only a matter of time until pregnant women seek birthcare through the clinic services, especially since the number of midwives is declining. The current trend is that once a midwife dies or retires, her daughters, relatives, or others have little desire to take over.

One medical service that received the minimum response of the relocatees has been the distribution of contraceptives. Like other rural areas in the region, New Nubia was provided with family planning clinics where pills would be available free of charge. Records, however, indicate a very limited response and a high percentage of dropouts among registered clients. There are many reasons, technical and human, that cause such lack of interest. To cite just a few examples, the pill seems to be an inappropriate contraceptive

device given the irregular pattern of absent husbands. Moreover, Nubians would prefer to have a large population to cope with the dominant neighboring groups rather than a “shrunked community,” as one local Nubian leader commented. Female modesty, husbands’ reluctance, and suffering from the pill’s side effects were other reasons often reported by women for refusing to use the pill. Whatever the reasons, the significant question is whether or not Nubians actually need birth control at this stage of demographic instability.

I wish to distinguish between diseases that resettlement actually brought about—or those that Nubians already had before resettlement—and the state of ‘feeling ill’ as a result of resettlement. A health survey in a sample of Nubian villages was administered during the fall of 1975 as part of a nationwide study assessing the health impacts of the Aswan High Dam and Lake Nasser. It is not my intention here to list the kind of diseases emerging from resettlement, as no empirical material is yet available, but it is widely assumed among officials that the extension of irrigation in the relocation area and the increasing contact between men and water has resulted, or will result, in the spread of bilharzia. No comparative statistics are available to validate such an assumption, however. Doctors report finding cases of bilharzia among the relocatees, but they do not view the disease as widespread. It seems possible to predict limited incidences of bilharzia among the relocatees in contrast to the neighboring groups, since only 60 percent of the relocated Nubian families are landholders, of whom a large proportion are not actually engaged in agricultural work. Also, since children are encouraged to go to school, they are rarely seen doing agricultural work. Yet, children are exposed to the disease much more than men because of their frequent swimming and bathing in canals, especially on warm days year-round.

When asked what new diseases had appeared and what old diseases had disappeared since resettlement, informants responded that despite improved medical care, they were much healthier in their homeland and have become “sick” in the new land. Old Nubia is “health,” while New Nubia is “illness,” an informant said. No old diseases have gone away; on the contrary, informants generally said, they have increased. Their list of new diseases includes heart attacks, diabetes, high blood pressure, and mental disorder, to mention only the most common. Some informants mentioned crime, in terms of theft, mugging, and rape, as a serious new community disease brought about by resettlement. This runs contrary to the feeling of security they enjoyed in their old home villages, referred to as “the land of security and peace.”

While police records indicate a minimum crime incidence compared to the unusually high crime rate of the neighboring communities, police officials said that Nubian young men seem to have gradually adopted some crimes (such as rape and mugging) from neighboring groups. Nevertheless, because of the common stereotypes about Nubians as honest and peaceful, and about neighboring groups as aggressive and dishonest, the latter have always been scapegoats for whatever crime or delinquency occurs.

Among the things women complained of was physical fatigue. Some women informants indicated, more specifically, that in many cases giving birth is not as smooth as it used to be. In a similar vein, Fawzia Hussein, a female physical anthropologist who conducted research regarding the impact of resettlement on women's lives, has said that the limited physical movement of relocated women in contrast to what they were used to, combined with a long period of stressful life has possibly affected their health conditions and in some cases their physiological performance. During the two years following resettlement, women were actually engaged in hard physical work such as gardening for food and assisting in remodeling their houses into better living quarters. Recently, their activities have become limited and take place mostly indoors or within the village boundaries.

Relocation affected not only the women's physical health but also their mental health. Female informants reported an increase in the incidence of psychological depression and mental disorder among Nubian women. Some reasons are related to the lack of privacy in crowded living quarters and the absence of the security they previously had in their old habitat. Georg Gerster, a Swiss traveler and photographer, was right to believe, in my view that "the old architecture of the Nubian house aims to ease the mind of the departing husband" (1963:611). The new houses hardly provide such relief. While it was assumed that moving to the new land would provide better economic opportunities that could turn men into permanent village residents, that did not happen to the extent expected. Consequently, women found their men—whether husband, brother, son or father—once again absent and leaving them behind in a different setting in which they could not feel as safe or secure as they did in Old Nubia. In addition, women's responsibilities have become much greater than before. They continued to be the guardian of traditions, in addition to the heavy burden of coping with the everyday household-related problems and challenges aggravated by a bad economic situation and inadequate housing.

Most people who complained of the state of individuals' and of community illness are in their late forties and older. These 'diseases' do exist, as

doctors report, but are not widespread. Nubians may have had them before, but due to the lack of modern medical services, they were unaware of them. Doctors informed me that Nubians often come to the clinic complaining of being ill and diagnosing their illness as high blood pressure or diabetes, while tests prove negative. This phenomenon suggests that Nubians most probably imagine being ill to convince themselves and others that "New Nubia is particularly bad" and "relocation has actually been a misfortune." This attitude of rejecting the new situation seems to have contributed to the development of a 'past orientation' among many Nubians, especially the elderly. During my visit of March 1975, I found that many Nubian informants talked frequently about the "good old days," tended to reject their present situation, and hoped for very little in the future. A month earlier, in February, when the government announced plans for settlement and development of the dam's lake, the issue of returning to the original homeland was dramatized. Although there were opposing views, the fact remains that if after a decade or more since resettlement people are willing to move out, this indicates unsuccessful cases of adaptation in the new environment.

## **Conclusion**

In September 1971, an international workshop entitled "Human Settlements on New Lands in the Arab World" was held in Cairo for two weeks under the auspices of the SRC. One issue argued at length was the question of how many years elapse before self-sufficiency among displaced people is achieved. In his rapporteur's statement, George Foster (1971) noted that the workshop participants raised the question whether, once a deep dependency relationship is established, as in the case of village relocation, it can ever be broken. Indeed, a number of studies suggest that once a critical dependency relationship is established between the government and an individual, class, or a community, breaking the relationship is the exception rather than the rule.

In this context, the Nubian experience presents a striking exception. While the relocation scheme created a heavy dependence of the displaced community on the relocation authorities, since their arrival in the Kom Ombo region the Nubians have developed a more or less independent attitude in dealing with some of the immediate resettlement difficulties and problems. The widespread phenomenon of planting small gardens in the houses' courtyards (or whatever space permitted) was an example of such independent practice to cope with the food crisis. Nevertheless, the relocatees did maintain a strong client relationship with the government in order to reinforce the

government's moral obligations to accommodate the Nubian demands. Along with a gradual breaking of total dependency on the relocation authorities, the relocatees have also shown an explicit and vigorous attitude of resentment, which has resulted from the government's failure to keep its promises of providing satisfactory living conditions.

The community health aspects of relocation schemes should not be viewed as one-shot measures for providing new medical services to the relocatees at their new setting. They should be planned, implemented, and assessed as a longitudinal process that begins after relocation plans are declared (but before actual relocation) and continues until the relocatees show evidence of being sound in body and mind. Moreover, on the basis of the Nubian experience, it is clearly important to orient the relocatees from the beginning to take a participatory role and to pursue a policy of independence. Policy makers and social scientists need to pay attention to the mental as well as physical health aspects of the displaced community in assessing progress toward adjustment. The development of an adaptive state of mind needs, however, a potentially viable resettlement and development scheme.

I believe that the dependency syndrome can be minimized if governments make clear to the relocatees that, for example, the making of "stability, prosperity and a decent life" (quoted from the Egyptian vice president's speech to Nubians in January 1960) is not exclusively a government responsibility. The role of the people should be spelled out and emphasized in order to promote a feeling of shared responsibilities and induce local initiatives. The relocatees, of course, should be given credit and shown appreciation for their sacrifices in the national interest, but they also ought to be aware that the government is able only to help them to regain their normal life. Commenting on the tremendous number of Nubian complaints, a top official made the point that the "government is now trapped by its previous promises which made Nubians believe that it would carry them on its shoulders rather than just helping them to stand up once again."

## Notes

- 1 The data in this paper were collected during fieldwork among Egyptian Nubians following their relocation in 1964 as the result of the construction of the Aswan High Dam. Subsequent fieldwork was conducted between 1969 and 1975. The research was sponsored by the Social Research Center of the American University in Cairo, Egypt, at the request of the Ministry of Land Reclamation.

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# Field Research and Training of Autochthonous People

## My Own Experience in Nubia

Anna Hohenwart-Gerlachstein\*

In our days, field research should preferably be done in areas that are in danger of great changes. Every one of us could cite an endless list of countries, peoples, and languages that are menaced by forced displacement and even disappearance before having been documented. Minority cultures and languages in particular are threatened by mightier neighbors and industrialized nations. With technical improvements and mechanical achievements, people are pushed into new, unwanted situations (cf. Kubik 1987:55–61).

The case I wish to deal with concerns the minority culture and language of the Egyptian Nubians whom I investigated in the 1960s before their evacuation. It was pathetic to work in a country and among people whose days in their homeland were limited. In my fieldwork, anthropology could only be applied as a humanitarian discipline, aiming at the safeguarding of the—then present—and last stage of an ancient culture. This approach should be the leading star for all my work in this region.

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Before going into detail, I wish to briefly explain how and why I was selected for this enterprise. I had worked among the Egyptian Bedouins before and was somehow familiar with the area, so when Professor Alfred Métraux from UNESCO, Paris, visited me in Vienna, he talked about the Aswan High Dam, then under construction, and the numerous campaigns of archaeologists working to salvage the ancient temples and monuments. He concluded with the question: "And what about the people?" He beseeched me to start documentation at my earliest convenience. Well aware of the fact that the riverine people's culture was destined to disappear along with their settlements, I considered it my duty to fulfill this urgent task as soon as possible.

In 1962, the world knew that the Nubians had no chance of changing the governmental decision, they just had to give in and prepare for their forced exodus. Their land along the Nile stretched over some 350 kilometers from the Sudanese frontier to the first cataract near Aswan and comprised six hundred *naga's*, or hamlets, the units of community life. The people saw the impending and inevitable danger of complete culture change approaching, and they were continuously thinking of their displacement and unknown future life.

This was the situation when I first visited a number of villages on my survey tour by boat, staying only a few days in every language zone. There were the Fadija Nubians in the south, the Arab Nubians in the middle, and the Kenuz Nubians in the north. The result of my literature studies was that in the southernmost part among the Fadija there was a stretch of land where anthropologists had not done much work. The zone of my investigations had been decided upon, and the choice for the establishment of my headquarters was not incidental. On my survey tour I was not only kindly received in al-Dirr but also asked by some teachers to return and help them in the documentation of their heritage. They had clearly seen the full decay of their culture and wished to get some advice for the best way of ethnological documentation.

Besides interested teachers, there were also some villagers who were curious to find out in what function I had come and why I wished to remain in their homeland. Of course, I first informed the local authorities of the motive and incentive for my enterprise and reassured them of my intention "to work with the autochthonous people and for the people's sake."

I know that in many third-world countries, anthropology was often seen in the light of the colonial period where researchers had been "using early theories and practices, and have done irreparable damage to the integrity and scientific knowledge of Third World people" (Avorgbedor 1988:3, 4).

I think it was obvious from the very beginning that my procedure was clear and no mistrust ever came up in the communities. Splendid cooperation between the Nubians and myself as an outsider gave us the opportunity to eliminate mistakes or misunderstandings while in Nubia.

J. Vansina (1967:102) once rightly said that “fieldwork is an art based on techniques” which always have to be modified according to the cultural pattern. In the case of Nubia, I tried to apply all necessary and indispensable techniques to cover numerous aspects of the vanishing country.

My informants were willing to cooperate in every possible way, but first had to be made to understand that every detail within a culture is important and has to be documented. When at first ‘anthropology’ seemed to them a strange discipline they soon understood that, in its wide range, it can be followed up in all walks of life. Gradually my ‘disciples’ learned my research methods, of course, not so much in theory but rather in practice.

Equipped with camera, recorder, and notebook we went around—first in our own village then in the neighboring *naga*’s (hamlets), then across the river, and on and on, until the stretch of land I wished to document was covered. Though I was usually accompanied by my interpreters and informants, I became so popular that—in spite of my limited knowledge of the language—the villagers kindly greeted me and invited me into their houses. By participant observation I acquired a good knowledge of the material culture, village life, and personality.

Because of my good relations with the people in general and my informants in particular, we not only documented the physical heritage but also the non-physical, namely, language and music. We took part in school performances where we could record speech and songs.

Of great importance were our invitations to wedding parties, the biggest ceremonies and festivities the Nubians celebrated in Old Nubia.

In the last years before their migration to Egypt, many young couples decided to marry in traditional style with music and dancing, inviting close and distant relatives from all over Nubia and forgetting their grief and sorrow in those happy days.

Within a few weeks my local cooperators fully understood how to help me in recording, photographing, and finally also in translating speeches and texts. They themselves started collecting proverbs and anecdotes because they knew that I was very keen on documenting the Nubian language.

The last period when fieldwork could be carried out in the southern part of Old Nubia was in 1963. When I left in December, displacement of the northern Nubians, the Kenuz, was under way. The landing places of the

different villages along the sloping banks of the Nile were covered with the limited amount of household effects and personal belongings that the people wished to transfer to their new homes.

Through my repeated visits and long stays in the same area, always stressing my mission of safeguarding the Nubian culture, I was somehow training the whole population in the rescue of their own heritage.

The last stages of evacuation were of special interest to the Ethnographic Museum in Vienna, and I was asked to bring back a representative collection of items reflecting the material culture. My request was graciously met not only in my own village but also among the neighboring communities. Many people joined in, selecting and bringing transportable furniture, household articles, ceramics, clothes, and minor belongings, so that finally my collection included over one hundred items. The success was only due to the intellectual training I had given to the Nubians, and their confidence in my personality.

The years 1963 and 1964 were the final days. Large passenger boats went up and down the Nile, evacuating village after village, proceeding from north to south, until six hundred *naga's* were emptied and the population brought to the new settlements in Kom Ombo. The relocated were squeezed into forty-three villages in New Nubia where most of the houses were not even ready. The depression of the people was most difficult to overcome. It took them years to surmount the displacement from their beautiful, peaceful, and harmonious country life to the new environment.

By correspondence my Nubian cooperators were keeping me informed on the current events in New Nubia: on the difficult stages the people have been going through, on the thorny problems they had to solve in accommodation and housing, and on the societal changes all over the country.

Years later, my informants began to enquire when I would revisit them. Knowing the national pride of the Nubians on one side and aware of their sensitivity, I would never have gone and visited them at an earlier date than when they themselves were ready to receive me. I understood perfectly well that they first wanted to be fully established in their families and in the changed society. Above all they wished to show that Nubians with high education had again acquired positions according to their good standard. Whether they were teachers or employees before, they all answered the Egyptian demand.

Though I never tried any group training but rather concentrated on some selected persons, the people around our team often joined in, as it was

known by everyone that our enterprise was aimed at conservation. My informants were clever in interesting old and young people in our relevant studies and recording as well as photographing. The working techniques seem to have attracted the villagers, and so—without being specially asked—they followed us and learned to collect for their own sake.

When I returned to the Nubian communities twenty years later, it was to my pleasure and great surprise that the people not only recognized and greeted me kindly, but immediately remembered my daily walks from place to place in order to safeguard and document every instant of their—then living—but soon vanished landscape and village life. I am happy to say that my repeated call for preservation in the early days has never been forgotten but is still alive. It seems as if the people—the farther they are away from their beloved former homeland—the more they wish to recollect their heritage.

Within the last years, my former informants, whom I trained in Old Nubia, had started again with the salvage work. Under the guidance of Aziz Abdel Wahab Soliman, my co-chairman of the International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences (IUAES) Regional Nubian Center, the working team is concentrating on non-physical heritage. They have been and are collecting further material on Nubian history, society, oral literature, and music, and the data will be published in book form.

In light of my extended and repeated studies in Nubia, I wish to underline the fact that from the very beginning it seemed to me indispensable that I—as an outsider—had to work with insiders. Both sides can make valuable contributions to the knowledge and scientific interpretations of a culture area. At the same time on both sides certain dangers may come up. While the insiders could easily be ethnocentric in their interpretation, the outsiders might lose objectivity and likely become inclined to generalization. Therefore it is compulsory that the investigating outsider examine the data obtained many times.

“Training of autochthonous people needs consequent cooperation and lacunae are to be avoided and errors eliminated. By checking over and over again, the consciousness of the insiders is evoked and controlled” (Colson 1954). Before publishing my field material I used to have long discussions with my Nubian collaborators because I was always afraid of some misunderstanding. The most difficult part of my Nubian research was my linguistic notes. I could not possibly start working on them without vernacular interpreters. I did as much as my time allowed on the spot, but to work on the extended material I asked one of my assistants, Hussein Abdel Galil Ali, to follow me to Vienna, where we worked many months together. He

helped me to phonetically transcribe the non-written Nubian texts and get them properly translated and explained. We also compiled an abbreviated vocabulary as well as a grammatical sketch. As little had been done in the Fadija Nubian language, our collection represents a valuable documentation, all registered on tape, and now published in my book *Nubien-forschungen* ("Nubian Researches") in 1979. This was one of the most urgent salvage actions because the language was—even before migration—on the brink of disappearance.

Over time, I managed to get my research material, collected on different campaigns, mostly written up and published, the numerous tapes well stored in the Phonogramme Archive of the Austrian Academy of Sciences, the Collection of Ethnographic Material was exhibited and then also stored in the Vienna Ethnographic Museum's depot, and the rich collection of Nubian slides are safely kept in my personal archive.

On my last trip to Nubia, I was very much impressed by the people whose behavior and character has not changed in spite of new environment. Displacement and loss of their ancestral homes did not deprive them of their inner serenity, kindness, and helpfulness. My former experience with the Nubians was reinforced, and I was happy to state that these people really deserved to be helped in every possible way.

When I considered the extended documentation on Nubia in word, sound, and picture I had collected myself, I decided that I should not preserve it all in Vienna only, but should make it available to the Nubians in their new environment.

In 1988 I started by donating a slide projector and a large collection of Nubian slides to Aziz Abdel Wahab Soliman, co-chairman of the IUAES-Regional Center on Urgent Research in New Nubia in Diwan.

The positive effect of this gift was tremendous and far greater than expected. The Nubians were interested in seeing pictures of their former homeland, so, wherever we went, we showed them a slide show. I had selected some characteristic shots of different parts of the Nile Valley, villages sitting directly on the river or situated on the rocky slopes, nicely painted and picturesque houses, lively scenes on the riverbank when the weekly boat arrived, and also some pictures taken on festive occasions.

I immediately sensed that the series I brought with me would whet people's appetite for more and more illustrations of Old Nubia. I promised to try my best, and attempted to provide the Nubian Center with a great part of my own slide and tape collections meant to document the Nubians' ir retrievable heritage.

Unfortunately time and money are working against my plan to get all my writings on the Nubians translated and to furnish them with the material that was collected “with the people and for the people”.

As an epilogue to this paper I want to express in a few words the feeling I had on my last trip to New Nubia in the spring of 1988. This time I had a contract with the UNESCO initiative “Safeguarding Non-Physical Heritage”—concerning Nubian music. Before embarking on the UNESCO request, I first had to turn to my Nubian friends and get their permission to record among them in different parts of the country. They gave their consent and, on my arrival, a hearty welcome.

Aziz Soliman did the utmost in his preliminary arrangements so that, on the arrival of our team, a tight program for the length of our limited sojourn was handed over to me. Thanks to him, the enterprise was most successful and the results satisfactory.

Aziz Soliman is a prominent figure in the area. Over the years he has become an excellent organizer and adviser for ethnological investigations. Today he is joined by a group of friends who join in his endeavors and take part in his interests.

I could observe that by now the Nubians know very well how to document their own culture. I think my mission is over, and all the important work among the Nubians will be done by themselves. They know best what part of the heritage is to be saved for posterity.

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## Nubian Culture and Ethnicity

Robert A. Fernea and Aleya Rouchdy\*

The community of Egyptian Nubians, resettled a generation ago when their ancestral lands were covered by the backwaters of the High Dam at Aswan, provide a contemporary example of a people whose sense of their own ethnicity has been redefined and revitalized by this radical change of circumstances. At the same time, there has been a loss of many aspects of their cultural legacy. The relocation has profoundly affected their personal lives and the nature of their existence as a recognized community among the people of the Egyptian Nile Valley. It is almost axiomatic that losing homes and villages and moving to a radically different environment must result in changes of various kinds and degree. Such changes do not simply end after a given period of time, however. Twenty-three years, a full generation, has now gone by and the course of Nubian history in Egypt is obviously different from that which it would have taken had these 56,000 people remained in Old Nubia. The question is then not just what has happened to them but in what directions this group of people may be moving: does the contrast between their lives before resettlement and their lives at the present time reveal a course of development which suggests what the future may hold for them?

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Though many aspects of Nubian culture and social organization which existed before the building of the High Dam have changed or disappeared, the Nubians in contemporary Egypt, since their resettlement, have become, for the first time, an ethnic group with self-awareness. As such, we believe the Nubians are likely to play an ever more important role in the political and economic life of Upper Egypt and in the national life of Egypt as a whole.

In using the emergence of ethnicity as the paradigmatic basis for discussing what has happened to the Nubians in Egypt since their resettlement nearly a quarter of a century ago, it is necessary to compare the past with the present. In so doing, we will be concerned with the Nubians primarily, while aware of the context of their transformation. Egypt, still a largely rural, agrarian society in the 1950s, is now an urban and industrializing society in the 1980s.

The Nubians in Egypt have moved from isolated communities into a multicultural situation in Upper Egypt. But even in the past, many of the men traveled to the cities of Egypt to find work and hence were scarcely isolated. However, the majority of the women rarely if ever left their native communities, which were located along the Nile at some distance from each other and from the Sa'idis, the agricultural people of Upper Egypt. Today the new communities, or 'homelands' of the Egyptian Nubians, are not only much closer together and more densely populated but are more nearly contiguous with other peoples within the growing, partially industrialized province of Aswan. The Sa'idi people are now close neighbors. We believe that under these and other related circumstances, to be discussed below, the Nubians of Egypt have become an even stronger *ethnic* group than they were before resettlement, while at the same time losing much of their *cultural* uniqueness. How can this be? What is the nature of Nubian ethnic identity, and how stable is it likely to remain? To suggest some answers to these questions we must first examine the nature of 'ethnicity' as an analytic paradigm.

## **Ethnicity**

The distinction between cultural differences and ethnic identity was most cogently stated in a seminal essay by Fredrik Barth (1969), in which he pointed out that the way a group perceives itself and is perceived by others is a matter of *ascribed* characteristics. *Ethnic* differences cannot be accounted for solely in terms of objective cultural differences. In recognizing the subjective aspect of ethnicity, it is also important to recognize that ethnicity is

not merely a state of mind. The pattern of oppositions between one social group and another must relate to a set of life circumstances in which the individual finds significance in his or her ethnic identity, or is so placed in such circumstances by others. Perhaps the issue can be stated thus: 1) In a particular historic setting, 2) social conditions persist which 3) make particular cultural differences assume widespread significance, therefore 4) becoming instrumental in maintaining boundary markers between two social groups. These boundary markers exist at certain points in social practice and in cultural expression.

In the discussion that follows, our intention is to look at the cultural differences and boundary markers between Egyptian Nubians and other Egyptians, attempting in this way to evaluate the importance of the changes in material conditions of social life which have taken place since resettlement. The underlying question we intend to address is whether, under present circumstances, it is likely that such boundaries will be maintained between the Nubians and other Egyptians. To answer this query we will attempt to suggest where social boundaries may be located in everyday life, and how such boundaries relate to the patterns of production and reproduction upon which Nubian subsistence and daily life depend.

Are the Egyptian Nubians an ethnic group? Until the advent of the High Dam, people from Nubia referred to themselves both by tribal and family origin and according to the name of the district from which they came. Within their districts Nubians were known according to their descent group and their particular village of origin. At that time, the people called 'Nubians' did not ordinarily use the term to refer to themselves, nor did they regard as one group all the dark-skinned people speaking a language other than Arabic and living along the banks of the Nile between Aswan and the Sudan.

If, before resettlement in 1964, the people of Nubia felt any common identity with each other, it was based on political and economic grievances with the Egyptian government. They had all experienced flooding of palm groves and villages when the first dam at Aswan was built at the turn of the century and again each time the barrage was raised. The last time this happened, in 1933–1934, some families chose to take their compensation money and settle north of Aswan. The agricultural resource basis of life in most of the region was once and for all destroyed. Many Nubians felt they had never been adequately compensated for their losses. Those who moved above the flood waters in Old Nubia also insisted that the government had neglected them in terms of educational facilities and health clinics, both of

which were thinly distributed in the region. However, even in this respect important differences divided the Nubians. The Kenuz, living closer to the dam, suffered greater flooding and could cultivate river shoreland only about two months each year when the reservoir was low; the Fadija to the south had more land left uncovered for longer periods of the year and palm groves still existed in districts near the Sudan border. Furthermore the government had installed diesel pump irrigation projects in five districts, creating some districts of relative prosperity while the others remained impoverished. Thus, there were real economic differences between the Nubian communities before the High Dam was built.

The number of Nubian labor urban migrants increased after the additional loss of agricultural land in 1935. Often referred to by the pejorative term *barabra* in vernacular Egyptian Arabic, many of these migrants worked as servants in private homes and in service jobs in restaurants and hotels. Only a relatively small number of educated Nubians were working as professionals or civil servants at this time. While the Nubians' color and style of dress was a factor identifying them in urban society, their language was even more important. Nubians were said by other Egyptians to speak *barbari*, an inferior dialect that resulted in their Arabic being accented and imperfect; thus, the proper recitation of Islamic prayers was impossible. Only in the 1950s, as the High Dam and subsequent flooding of Nubia became imminent, did the stigma attached to this perception of the Nubians begin to shift somewhat.

It was President Gamal Abdel Nasser who first used 'Nubian' as a term of reference in the media for the entire population above Aswan. In speaking about the building of the High Dam, he drew attention to the great patriotic sacrifice the Nubians were going to have to make in losing their land and homes for the general benefit of all Egyptians. However, Nasser's comments on the radio and in the newspapers by no means changed the attitude of all Egyptians, many of whom continued to look down upon the Nubians to some extent. The Egyptian elite and the foreign population which could afford to hire Nubians as servants often praised them for their honesty and faithfulness. It was urban Egyptians in much the same socioeconomic position as the migrant Nubians who continued to express negative attitudes toward them.

Since they were to some degree a stigmatized group in the cities of Egypt, it is not surprising that working-class Nubians as far as possible remained within their own social groups. It was usually men from the same communities who helped each other get jobs and worked together. The

Nubians were a long way from thinking of themselves as one group, even in Cairo or Alexandria, away from their native communities.

However, certain opinions about working-class Egyptians were widely shared among all Nubians. The Nubians felt the urban Egyptians to be generally lacking in cleanliness and honesty, behavior that they (and their elite employers) highly valued. They contrasted urban life in Lower Egypt with Old Nubia, their “blessed land,” a place where one did not have to worry about thieves or violence, where the peacefulness so lacking in the cities prevailed. Indeed, they shared many of the negative attitudes not infrequently expressed by upper-class Egyptians and foreigners about *baladi* Egyptians.<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand, to most *baladi* Egyptians, Nubians were not *baladi* enough, in the positive sense of this term; they lacked the necessary qualities of ‘Egyptianness’ connoted by that ambiguous adjective, especially a sharp sense of wit and a gift for ironic repartee, which never leaves a true Egyptian at a loss for words.

### **Before the Dam**

Thus, in 1960, before resettlement, Egyptians and Nubians felt superior to each other. For the Nubians, this sense rested on two grounds: 1) self-esteem derived from well-deserved reputations among the foreigners and high-status Egyptians for whom they worked, and 2) a strong sense of identity with their own communities, a sense of their importance in their own land. It would be difficult to over-estimate the symbolic importance of Old Nubia—and even though it is now under water, much of its symbolic significance remains.

For those Nubians who lived in their own villages, ceremonial life was a tangible demonstration of solidarity among the different local groups, as well as evidence of distinctions between them. For in Old Nubia, the other Egyptians did not exist. Intra-Nubian distinctions became sharper. Nubians—Kenuz, Arab, and Fadija—spoke their own distinctive dialects and invested their time and energy in their own rites and rituals. Just as the houses reflected the status of individual families, the ceremonies were also of great symbolic importance, reinforcing ties with the community. All of these rituals—weddings, *mulids*, or ‘*azas*—were the Nubians’ own, a rich ceremonial life about which much more could be said. The important point is that this symbolic property was part of the way in which Nubians thought of themselves as superior to other Egyptians. The same could be said of the traditional Nubian homes, a source of pride and satisfaction to their Nubian

owners. However, Egyptian neighbors, employers, or fellow workers knew nothing of the special qualities of Nubian life.

Before their resettlement, the Nubians lived with the illusion of independence in most of their villages; a visible Egyptian presence was rare throughout Nubia. We stopped at communities in 1961 where residents could not remember a previous non-Nubian visitor. Generally, non-Nubians were only to be found at the Egyptian administrative headquarters for Nubia in 'Aniba, one of the districts near the center of the region, and there was a border police station in south Ballana. For most Nubian districts, a once-a-week visit from the Sudanese postboat was the only contact with the outside world.

The Nubians were subordinate within the political economy of the country; they could not prevent the obliteration of their land. But on a day-to-day basis the illusion of independence and freedom was very strong. No one who ever visited a Nubian village could have overlooked that ambiance.

Was the Nubian–Egyptian relationship stratified in Egyptian cities before resettlement? The Nubians' position in the service sector of the pre-industrial labor force was privileged in that they were preferred for the work they did and often had primary responsibility for the day-to-day aspects of their labor.

Working as servants and surrounded by non-Nubians, Nubians spoke their own language, a practice that, like the employment itself, was both stigmatizing and at the same time offered a degree of independence. The Nubians' ability to control, to a degree, the conditions of their employment made their work more acceptable. It seemed to us who lived among Nubians in the 1960s that it was with the elites of Egypt, native and foreign, that many of the Nubian men identified; the elites were the people whose manners they admired and to whose standard of living they aspired.

It is tempting to conclude that the mystifications of the 'blessed land,' that impoverished shore of the Nile where they felt themselves to be free in their own beautiful universe, were reinforced by the Nubian experience in urban employment. The sense of personal worth which seems to have resulted has served the Nubians well, helping them through the radical adjustments of the last twenty years.

### **Since the Dam**

What has happened in the last twenty years? Have the Nubians of Egypt been able to maintain their illusions of independence? Can they now reproduce their old symbolic world in a new setting? What has become of their

sense of personal identity and their social goals? The answer is complex and to generalize about all Egyptian Nubians today is even more questionable than to generalize about them historically. However, there are some strong tendencies that we can describe and that seem to be part of the direction in which many Nubians are moving. To do so, we must look briefly at the long-term effects of the conditions of resettlement as well as their social and economic adjustments within the context of greater Egypt and the Middle East today.

While the districts were lined up as they had been in Nubia, individual villages in the districts have disappeared into the general housing projects. The new houses have lost their relationship with the organic nature of the community; kinsmen have been scattered far and wide, and old patterns of neighborly reciprocity have been broken. The new Nubian communities lack the symbolic meaning of the old villages. Whether or not they want to be, Nubians are no longer isolated. It is far easier to spend time away from the new communities than it was in the past. The Nubian communities are surrounded by Sa'idis, the majority population in the region, and many Sa'idis are actually working for the Nubians. Interacting with Sa'idis has become a familiar experience for most Nubians, including women. In short, not only are most of the new villages densely populated and residentially arranged without reference to kinship or social networks, but much more movement and contact with non-Nubians is taking place even for the women, children, and men who stay home.

For younger Nubians, men and women, schooling in an Egyptian setting is a nearly universal experience. Education was always highly regarded in Old Nubia and seen as the avenue to greater personal success. Today, elementary and secondary schools in New Nubia are overflowing with thousands of children born since resettlement. Education is having a tremendous impact on the lives of younger Nubians, all of whom seem to aspire to white-collar jobs. Nubians do not generally regard the resettlement area as any more self-sufficient than Old Nubia before the High Dam. Thus, their enthusiasm for education and for professional or at least white-collar jobs for their children is based on a very realistic appraisal of their situation.

This desire for white-collar jobs is consistent with old attitudes about manual labor, especially agricultural work, which we have heard in conversations over many years. The failed efforts of the Egyptian government in the last twenty years to make sugarcane farmers out of the resettled Nubians suggests that distaste for manual labor and associated attitudes have created a serious impediment to the government's original resettlement plans.<sup>2</sup>

The forms of cultural expression brought from Nubia have changed radically, and much of today's cultural experience in the new communities is similar to that of other Egyptians. Weddings and *mulids* are now abbreviated in form and content. Death ceremonies (*'azas*) have been reduced from the fifteen days of mourning necessary to allow absent relatives to return home, to three days. Male circumcision ceremonies seem to be disappearing. The decline in the number of *mulids* and the changes in wedding ceremonies may not only be a result of demographic changes but could also signal a growing concern for conformity with what may be considered standard Islamic practice in contemporary Egypt. The new concern for religious practice goes along with constant exposure to Egyptian television, for this and other aspects of modern Egyptian urban culture is reflected in the programming which the Nubians watch constantly. The use of Nubian dialects is declining in all sectors of the Nubian population, while there is a general increase in the understanding and use of Arabic (Rouchdy 1980).

Interest in other expressive aspects of Nubian culture is evident, at least as a form of entertainment. Many Nubians, young as well as old, feel pride in their history, and a sense of ethnicity is fostered among the children by the specifically Nubian displays and events sponsored by the Cultural Center in Aswan. Some commodifying of Nubian culture is taking place, a packaging of expressive forms for the consumption of others, as 'Nubian' dance acts appear in every hotel and night club of Aswan (and some in Cairo!).

Looking at the present situation of the Egyptian Nubians, we find that their strategies for earning a living have turned them away from Old Nubia—and for many also away from New Nubia. We cannot provide any quantitative information about the number of Nubians involved, but it is clear that today people of Nubian descent are found in almost every part of the Egyptian economy. The Egyptian census does not identify people according to race or ethnicity, this in itself suggesting the absence of any formal boundaries between Nubians and other Egyptians. Nubians, especially men, are experienced migrants and continue to migrate. Male absence from New Nubia was reported as high as 50 percent by an undersecretary of the Ministry of Land Reclamation in 1973; the 1976 census revealed sex ratios of from 38 to 50 percent of men among the Kenuz, 62:100 among the Arab Nubians, and 80:100 among the Fadija (Fahim 1983). The rates of migration have certainly increased by this time and many of the locally resident Nubians are working in nearby urban centers. However, some men have become involved in agriculture. Once irrigation and drainage problems in presently blighted areas of reclaimed land are solved, more Nubians may

turn to cash farming. However unsatisfactory the present situation may be, the Nubians will never abandon the reclaimed land, but as the population grows the percentage of descendants who can actually be fully supported by this resource will continue to decrease.

## **Conclusion**

What then of Nubian culture and ethnicity? Much of our discussion has centered on the loss of language, traditional customs and ceremonies, even the commercialization of dance and music. Yet the Nubians are far from disappearing as a distinctive part of Egyptian society. First, they share economic interests in the new settlements and residual claims to the land of Old Nubia. The government has still not granted them full title to their homes or lands and until this is done, the Nubians cannot sell their property or homes.<sup>3</sup> While some of the houses are presently empty, their owners settled in Lower Egypt use them as vacation homes, sending their children and elderly parents there part of the year and maintaining their claims. Perhaps, when deeds are granted, houses may be sold and the heterogeneity of the communities will increase as non-Nubians, such as the Sa'idis, move in, but this is still not possible. In fact, some Nubians are actually building new homes of their own in New Nubia with the petro-dollars they have earned abroad. These homes, unlike the government-issued houses, are registered as their own private property. While spending more money on the government houses has stopped, the new homes represent a significant investment and indicate a positive attitude toward the new settlements.

In addition to their common economic interests in New Nubia, the Nubians are becoming an increasingly important economic and political force in Upper Egypt. Educated Nubians are taking administrative jobs in every branch of the local government. They were able to fill most of the key posts of the local hierarchy of the Arab Socialist Party when it was the only permitted political organization. While the gap between local Nubians and the educated administrators still exists, as the levels of education rise in the new settlement this will gradually lessen and the ability of the local population to influence administrative decisions presumably increase. In short, the Nubians are becoming—may have already become—the dominant political and administrative group in the Aswan region. On the other hand, it would be a mistake to ignore the potential for factional disputes within the Nubian population, based on old social and linguistic divisions combined with new interests. There have been quarrels of various kinds, but information is lacking to assess how serious these differences may be or may become.

It is also important to remember that access to employment in Cairo still involves the use of personal contacts, networks of common interests, even in the western sectors of the economy. The Nubian urban clubs in Cairo date from as early as the 1920s and 1930s; they now occupy quarters that have in many cases become prime locations in the city, on some of the most fashionable streets. It is comparatively easy for them to evolve into middle-class establishments as the occupational status of the membership improves. Indeed, this is exactly what is happening in the one we visited on Kasr al-Nil street, where men in western-style business suits drank coffee and mingled while young men in jeans played pool. The clubs offer many advantages as a facility for weddings and funerals, but probably the most important may be in the way in which jobs are distributed and news of common interest disseminated. As in the past, they are a means of adjustment in the city and both a source and an expression of modern ethnicity. The Nubian clubs remain a valuable asset to the Nubians for this reason, but they are also of political importance. They have organized conferences and workshops to discuss their common problems with government officials. In 1975 they began to publish a monthly newsletter called *Akhbar el-nuba*, and they provided financial assistance for the pioneer settlements in Old Nubia, among other functions. In short, Nubian clubs have become political as well as economic and social organizations, working for the well-being of their membership in the city and in Upper Egypt.

In this regard Nubian women university graduates in Cairo also formed a club of their own in 1978, received a grant of land from the government to build a headquarters, and began the publication of *Ganub el-wadi* (Southern Valley), which includes information about the entire region. They also were active in supporting the efforts to establish communities above the High Dam. This parallels the civic interests of the women living in New Nubia, whose votes were a major factor in the 1976 election: out of 20,000 votes cast, 14,000 were women. In this respect, they are far more politically active than the Sa'idi women in the region (Fahim 1983:99).

Finally, interest in the future of the lands above the High Dam still remains strong, even if the current condition of the new communities there is not encouraging. In this respect, the possibilities of a common claim to whatever economic development may take place in Old Nubia is a unifying, common cause among all Nubians. Even if the hopes and dreams about future possibilities are still a long way from realization, they remain a subject of common concern among all the descendants of the Nubians who were born there.

Returning to the definition of ethnicity which began this discussion, we see that the contemporary setting still provides a persistent set of conditions, involving shared political and economic interests. These make being a Nubian important in defining this group's interests in opposition to those of others. Nubians both share common interests among themselves and compete with other Egyptians in an ever-wider variety of jobs. The alienating forces of modern urban employment have still not overcome group identity; being a Nubian will remain a significant difference to a great many people who have inherited this social status as long as real and potential economic interests remain viable, reinforced by the history they have shared and the self-ascribed characteristics of being Nubian.

At the same time, so far as other Egyptians are concerned, individual Nubians are free to pursue paths of individual mobility and become part of the population at large, as many Nubians have done in past generations. The urban, capitalist society of contemporary Egypt, with its growing middle class, makes individual social mobility far easier than in the more static agrarian past. Moreover Egypt is not a racist society and being a Muslim is a serious claim to equality, superseding all other social characteristics. While color may be judged on aesthetic grounds to be more attractive if lighter and less so if dark, personal achievement is of far greater importance in establishing one's social status. Thus, with greater access to educational opportunities and new job possibilities, the Nubians of Egypt are free to disappear as an ethnic group. But the great majority of Nubians have no desire to do so at the present time. It seems doubtful if this attitude will soon change.

## Notes

- 1 *Baladi* generally means someone belonging to a lower class, a native Egyptian, but it can also mean stupid, tasteless, with no savoir-faire, depending on the context of its use.
- 2 Another aspect was complications in the implementation of the distribution of land to the Nubians. Little land was ready at the time of resettlement, and more became available only slowly. Not all Nubians received land. The predominant strategy was to sharecrop, contrary to government goals of owner-farmers. (ed. Note)
- 3 It is not fully clear why the government has not proceeded to grant full title to the houses, but there are Nubians who fear that their neighbors would sell their homes to non-Nubians if they legally could, thus diluting the Nubian character of the settlement. Some say that government officials are afraid of

land speculation, for there is no question but that this real estate is becoming more valuable as the population of Upper Egypt steadily increases.

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## Appendix 1

### List of Districts in Old Nubia

Nubian *Nahias* (40 south of High Dam)

Kunuz (17)	1960 population census	No. of settlements
Dabud*	1,104	28
Dahmit	1,211	18
Ambarakab	1,334	29
Kalabsha*	707	13
Abu Hor	664	23
Marwaw	426	13
Maria*	333	17
Qursha	448	21
Garf Hussein	280	9
Kashtumna Gharb*	1,018	8
Kashtumna Sharq	528	17
al-Dakka	2,119	8
Qurta*	1,860	15
‘Allaqi	1,057	9
al-Muharraqa	360	6
Sayalla*	878	19
al-Madiq	1,358	22

### Arab (\*Aliqat) (5)

al-Sibu	564	8
Wadi al-Arab*	802	14
Shaturma	697	6
al-Sinqari	475	6
al-Malki*	1,381	17

### Fadija (18)

Kurusko wa-l-Riga	599	14
Abu Handal*	448	13
al-Diwan	966	17
Tumas wa Afia*	1,771	9
Qattah	600	7
Ibrim wa Jeziret Ibrim	1313	9
Aneiba	2,621	1
al-Gineina wa-l-Shibbak*	680	8
Masmas	374	10
Tushka Gharb*	1,958	14
Tushka Sharq	1,182	25
Arminna	1,321	7
Abu Simbel	2,630	18
Qustul	807	7
Ballana	5,100	30
Adindan*	1,790	24
Tinqalla	396	9
al-Dirr		?
* in Geiser sample	548	

*Note:* The 1960 census omitted the important district of al-Dirr. Hohenwart gives comparable figures for 1962 and they are included here.

## Appendix 2

### List of Interviews

- Ahmed Abou Zeid. Interviewed by Hopkins and Abdallah Cole, Alexandria, June 4, 2008.
- Tom Bartlett. Interviewed by Hopkins and Heba Gowayed, February 14, 2008, AUC.
- Karim Durzi. Answers to email questions, Hopkins, Toronto, October 21 and 28, 2008.
- Robert Fernea. Interviewed by Hopkins on July 18-19, 2007, Otis OR.
- Georg Gerster. Phone interview, Hopkins, Zürich, September 26, 2008. Follow up emails.
- Armgard Grauer. Interviewed by Hopkins, April 4 and November 16, 2008, Cairo.
- Fadwa el Guindi. Interviewed by Hopkins and Sohair Mehanna, SRC, October 17, 2007.
- Bahiga Haikal. Interviewed by Hopkins and Mehanna, June 17, 2009.
- Sondra Hale. Email exchange with Hopkins, November 18, 2009.
- Horst Jaritz. Answers to email questions, Hopkins, October 3, 2008.
- Samiha El Katsha and Sohair Mehanna. Interviewed by Hopkins and Gowayed, May 11, 2008, SRC.
- Hind Khattab. Interviewed by Hopkins, June 1, 2008, Maadi.
- Andreas and Waltraud Kronenberg. Email exchange with Hopkins, January 2010.
- Asaad and Nawal Nadim. Interviewed by Hopkins and Mehanna, February 26, 2008, their factory, Cairo.
- Beryl Slocum Powell. Telephone interview by Hopkins, Rhode Island, January 14, 2009.

Mohamed Riad and Stephanie Hohenwart-Wiesbauer. Interviewed by Hopkins, Heba Gawayed, and Mehanna, April 14, 2008, SRC.  
Ted Scudder. Answers to email questions, Hopkins, January 3, 2008. Conversation, California, April 2009.  
Susan Spector. Telephone Interview by Hopkins, New York, December 13, 2007.  
Laila el-Zein. Conversation with Hopkins, August 4, 2007, Washington DC.

## Appendix 3

### **Key Nubian Collaborators**

Abdallah, Ballana  
Aziz Abdel Wahab Soliman, Diwan and New Diwan  
Fahima Abdallah, Dahmit  
Fathey Bahr, Dahmit  
Hamza al-Din, Tushka  
Hussein Abdel Galil Ali, al-Dirr  
Mohamed Ibrahim Hilali, al-Malki  
Naima, Ballana  
Taha Mohamed, Dar al-Salam

## Appendix 4

### **PhDs Earned by Team Members**

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# Bibliography

Compiled by Nicholas Hopkins, Heba Gawayed, et al.  
Social Research Center, AUC

## Publications by Members of the NES Team and Affiliates

This list includes published and some unpublished works by authors associated with the Nubian Ethnological Survey. Much of this material, including all unpublished material, is in the Social Research Center Nubian archive in the American University in Cairo (AUC) archives, Rare Books and Special Collections Library. This list covers those who worked with the survey, those who were invited to attend the 1964 Aswan conference, or were otherwise affiliated with the survey, and those who published through the survey. Publications by the same authors not connected to the survey are listed in the next section.

This is a 'living' bibliography. We would appreciate hearing from anyone who knows of additional items, or indeed corrections or amplifications of these items. It would be even more welcome if copies of such additional items could be donated to the collection.

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## **Archival Collections**

Several archival collections contain material deriving from research in Old Nubia and the resettlement areas in the 1960s.

### **1. The Social Research Center Nubian Ethnological Survey Collection**

This collection focuses on the role of the SRC in the research process. It will be housed in the AUC library, university archives section. In addition to publications and administrative documents, it will include oral history interviews conducted between 2007 and 2009. It also includes reports and correspondence from the Ford Foundation concerning the Nubian Ethnological Survey. There are field notes by some of the research assistants, though not a complete collection. The archive includes a substantial collection of books and articles on Nubia including most of the ones listed in this book. Collections of photos from Abdul Fattah Eid and John Kennedy are included. When complete this will be listed in the catalog of the AUC library.

### **2. Charles Callender Papers, National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C.**

<http://www.nmnh.si.edu/naa/index.htm>

(A small selection is in the AUC collection.)

The Callender collection includes narrative field notes by Charles Callender, Fikri Abdel Wahab, Fadwa el Guindi, Nawal el-Messiri, and Jane Philips. It also includes summaries of individual questionnaires of Dahmit migrants living in Cairo and Alexandria, a collection of unlabeled photographs taken by Callender, census and other material including drafts of provisional analyses, maps and charts, etc. Fadwa el Guindi carried out a preliminary classification. A selection of this material was photocopied for the "SRC Nubian Archive." The SRC part includes a book-length manuscript, minus one chapter, entitled "The Kenuz of Nubia," evidently from the early 1970s.

### **3. Papers of Anna Hohenwart-Gerlachstein, PhD Vienna 1951**

Dr. Hohenwart left a collection of Nubian material culture in the Ethnographic Museum in Vienna. The Hohenwart-Gerlachstein Audio collection can be found at the Phonogrammarchiv of the Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna. See <http://catalog.pha.oeaw.ac.at/>. Many of the audio-records are in Arabic, and include the voices of Mohamed Riad and Kawthar Abdel Ras-soul. Below are references to the audio recordings.

Informationsreise 1962 durch Aegyptisch-Nubien. Aufnahmen gemeinsam mit Dr. Mohamed Riad und Dr. Kawthar Abdel-Rasoul, beide Cairo. Katalog der Tonbandaufnahmen B 7001-B 10.000 des Phonogrammarchivs der Oesterreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien. 84. Mitteilungen der Phonogrammarchivs-Kommission. B9364-9377 (Survey Tour 1962 through Egyptian Nubia. Recordings in cooperation with Dr. Mohamed Riad and Dr. Kawthar Abdel-Rasoul, both Cairo. Catalogue of Recordings B 7001-B 10.000 of the Phonogramme Archive of the Austrian Academy of Sciences in Vienna. 84th Report of the Phonogramme Archive's Commission. B9364-9377).

Field Research (Forschungsreise) 1962 in Egyptian Nubia. Katalog der Tonbandaufnahmen B 7001-B 10.000 des Phonogrammarchivs der Oesterreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien. 84. Mitteilungen der Phonogrammarchivs-Kommission. B9446-9480 (Survey Tour 1962 through Egyptian Nubia. Recordings in cooperation with Dr. Mohamed Riad and Dr. Kawthar Abdel-Rasoul, both Cairo. Catalogue of Recordings B 7001-B 10.000 of the Phonogramme Archive of the Austrian Academy of Sciences in Vienna. 84th Report of the Phonogramme Archive's Commission. B9446-9480).

Nubian Songs I and Nubian Songs II - Recorded in Collaboration with Hussein Abdel Galil Ali in 1962 and with Aziz Abdel Wahab Soliman in 1963, Vienna. Two Records.

Some documents and photographs were transferred in 2009 to the Center for Documentation of Cultural and Natural Heritage ("Cultnat"), a branch of the Bibliotheca Alexandrina, located in the Smart Village, km. 28, Cairo-Alexandria Road, Giza.

#### **4. Papers of Professor Thayer Scudder**

In 2008 Dr. Thayer Scudder of the California Institute of Technology donated a set of his papers from his work on the Nubian Survey to AUC. This is now deposited in the "SRC Nubian Ethnological Survey Collection." It includes originals of questionnaires from the 1962 field trip on the Nile, copies of questionnaires provided by Maher Habbob in 2007, and many reprints and drafts from Hussein Fahim and other authors. Scudder has the intention of depositing other material relating to his long career working with large dams and resettlement in the library of Cal Tech. He also has a collection of photographs, awaiting annotation.